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The Week

THE problem of finding enough money for relief of the unemployed is steadily growing more serious. Both private charity and municipal funds are about at the end of their rope; and many of the individual states have also exhausted their resources. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation is reported to have loaned to thirty-seven states $145,000,000 of its $300,000,000 fund; but additional needs already in sight will more than eat up the balance. The R.F.C., operating on its general policy of giving as little as possible (except to banks) wraps itself in a maze of red tape which the states find it almost impossible to break through. Moreover, the fact that it merely lends the money makes some states hesitate to apply for relief, a fact which in turn contributes to the misery into which at least a fifth of our population is now plunged. Harry L. Hopkins, New York state chairman of the Emergency Relief Organization, estimates that 500,000 families which are in need of relief are not getting it. Even those who are being aided receive pitifully inadequate amounts. The maximum anywhere in the United States is now about one dollar per person per week. In some states, it is only fifty cents. Trying to keep body and soul together on seven cents a day is only slow starvation.

IN VIEW of the inevitable necessities of the next few months, a bill has been introduced in the Senate for further federal relief. A combination of the Costigan-La Follette and Cutting bills, it appropriates $500,000,000 to be expended in the next two years. The money would not be granted in the form of loans, but as an outright contribution by the American government to keep American citizens from starvation. Forty percent of this money would be distributed among the states on a basis of population and the other 60 percent held in reserve to be sent where the need was greatest. The money would be raised through the sale of R.F.C. debentures and would, therefore, not constitute an immediate drain upon the Treasury. A special appropriation of $15,000,000 would be spent in the attempt to rescue America's "wild boys," the hundreds of thousands of lads, mostly between the ages of fifteen and twenty, whom the depression has turned lose upon the highways. This bill deserves to pass; if it fails to do so in the present Congress it will be brought up again in the April session which now seems inevitable. Mr. Roosevelt is understood to favor it, and his influence in that session will be great.

EVER since the war began in Manchuria, more than a year ago, the League of Nations has been trying to avoid the necessity of passing judgment upon it, fearing that the result of such action might be the destruction of the League itself. The Lytton investigation, although it produced a statesmanlike document, began chiefly as a device for delay. Next came the appointment of the Committee of Nineteen. Japan has, of course, done everything possible to prevent an adverse judgment by the Committee and has been aided in this by its friends in the League. As we go to press, an ingenious scheme has been advanced for saving Japan's face and allowing her to remain a League member. Accord-

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ing to this plan, which is the product of British indirection, the Committee of Nineteen will speak harshly about what Japan did in Manchuria, but its findings will remain a report *to* the League and, therefore, not an official document *of* that body. This sort of Machiavellian hair-splitting may satisfy the English and the Japanese, but it will please very few others. It will only confirm the general judgment already passed by the world: that in the Far Eastern situation, the machinery of the League for the maintenance of peace has failed, and, in doing so, has destroyed much of the prestige of the Geneva body.

IF THE Neville Chamberlain speech and the other expressions of British opinion last week represented England's last word on the war debts, then her negotiators who are coming to Washington in March might as well stay at home. The policy depicted is that debts must be scaled down in proportion to the Lausanne reparations agreement, and England will make no concession on any other point. This would mean something like a 93-percent cancellation of the war debts; and, desirable as the result would be, Congress would certainly reject such a proposal, even if Mr. Roosevelt would accept it. England is naïve about American public opinion but not so naïve as all this, and it is safe to assume, therefore, that she is establishing a bargaining position. The more she asks now, the more she will be able to concede in negotiation. This is also true of the Americans. There is evidence that many of our congressmen have begun to realize that if the terms are too high, England simply will not meet them. She will follow France into default, and America will be helpless to do anything about it. The chances are still good, therefore, that a compromise settlement may be reached along the lines we suggested last week: a lump-sum payment of $500,000,000 or $1,000,000,000, the money to be raised by an immediate bond issue in America and the proceeds used to balance next year's budget, or to refinance farm mortgages. Such a plan, accompanied by something which could be made to look like important trade concessions from the other side, would have a powerful appeal to American public opinion.

THE French Cabinet crisis was foreseen at the time Herriot fell on the war-debt issue. As The New Republic said then, he was lucky to be defeated on a question of honor involving foreign policy, in view of the fact that any Premier who remained in office was certain to be embarrassed by the lack of balance in the budget, which would require one or both of two unpopular actions—raising taxes or reducing the salaries of the large and powerful group of governmental functionaries. Since the political complexion of the Chamber and the Senate have changed but little, it was a foregone conclusion that any successor must base his Cabinet on the Radicals. The difficulty is to obtain enough allies to constitute a stable majority. M. Daladier at first turned toward the Left and attempted to reach an agreement with the Socialists, who had been greatly strengthened by the last election. But they are properly reluctant to accept any responsibility for a government which they do not control; they are anxious to avoid the mistaken strategy of the British Laborites. Also, they are no doubt prudent enough not to join a government which still has before it the unpleasant task of trying to balance the budget. M. Daladier was therefore compelled to turn toward the center; and his action in doing so is strengthened by the natural response in France to the establishment of a Hitler-Junker government in Germany. Economies at the expense of the military are now more unlikely than before. Perhaps, when the existing financial embarrassments are outlived, Herriot will return, though if the Nazi power in Germany performs as expected, a further shift to the right in France is not unlikely.

DE VALERA'S overwhelming victory in Ireland is all the more impressive for having been obtained under proportional representation and after the people had experienced his rigorous economic policy for many months. The explanation is simple. Cosgrave had no policy except surrender in the "economic war" and, as the chief organizer of the Cosgrave party boasted a year ago, the battle between the Cosgrave and de Valera supporters was a battle between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Now that the economic crisis has stopped emigration, Irish youth is placing its hope in de Valera's proposal for an Irish Five Year Plan which will establish a balance between industry and agriculture by encouraging small industrial enterprises throughout the country and free the Irish people from their dependence upon the British market. Britain's use of economic coercion, as political coercion had been used in the past, has been lending weight to the Sinn Fein contention that until Ireland becomes economically self-sufficient the country must bow to the will of the government in London. De Valera offered the majority of small Irish farmers, who live very near the subsistence level, a release from the debt burden by virtual repudiation of the land annuities. He claims that these are an intergovernmental debt to which "capacity to pay" and "nature of the origin" apply. Moreover, he is using a tariff barrier to make the economic secession complete and establish Irish self-sufficiency. This is essential for his plan to develop small industry to balance agriculture. He will use the Shannon power development as we ourselves might use Muscle Shoals to provide the South with power to revise its economic life and escape from the "colonial economy" to which it has been bound since 1607.

THE strikes which began last month in Detroit have been spreading until they now affect an im-

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portant section of the automotive industries. On January 11, five hundred workers at the Vernor Highway plant of the Briggs Manufacturing Company struck against a 20-percent reduction in wages. When these were restored to their former level, on January 15, the men went back to work. On January 20, there was a strike at the Motor Products Corporation; a 15-percent wage cut was quickly withdrawn by the management. On January 23, after a conference of the Auto Workers' Union, there were two more strikes—at the Hayes Body plant in Grand Rapids and at the Highland Park plant of the Briggs Manufacturing Company. The Briggs strike, which now involves three additional plants and six to ten thousand men, is the only one featured in the newspapers. It has stopped the delivery of automobile bodies to the Ford plant and halted the assembly line there, thus throwing 45,000 men out of work in Detroit alone, to say nothing of closing the Ford assembly plants in other cities. The Murray Body Plant, where a strike was threatened, has also shut down.

MR. FORD has charged that the strike at Briggs was instigated by "rival industrial interests" who are trying to gain control of the Ford Motor Company. As a matter of fact it was caused, like other recent strikes in the automotive industries, by low pay, continued wage cuts and bad working conditions. Whether or not it deserves the reputation, there is no doubt that the Briggs Manufacturing Company has been extremely unpopular among automobile workers. Safety regulations were said to be disregarded, and wages had been reduced to such a point, the strikers say, that in many cases a third of the pay check went simply for street-car fare. Communists are claiming to be leading the strike through the Auto Workers' Union. It is certain in any case that the strikers of all political factions are united in their determination not to return till wages are raised to a living standard and the shop committees are recognized. On January 30, when the employment offices at the Briggs plants were reopened, very few men asked to be rehired, and representatives of the Detroit unemployed marched on the picket line. So far during the depression, "labor troubles" have been chiefly confined to the laborers themselves. The new strikes in Detroit prove that if wages are reduced beyond a certain point, men will quit work, and prove, moreover, that the unemployed are willing to help them. Perhaps these strikes mark the end of one period in our industrial life and the beginning of another.

AGAINST the embattled opposition of Mr. Hoover and the heads of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the missing figures on the first five months of the R.F.C.'s operations have now been made public. They confirm everything reported by John T. Flynn in his article in Harper's, which was summarized recently in The New Republic. Throughout this five months' period, all the statements by President Hoover and the R.F.C. officials were completely misleading. They caused the American people to believe that most of the money loaned by the R.F.C. was going to small banks in small towns, whereas in fact the greater part of it went to a few big banks in the largest cities. Chicago, for example, received more money than seventeen states combined. Two banks got four-fifths of all the money sent to California. Five-sixths of the Connecticut loans went to two banks, which shortly thereafter closed their doors. Indeed, the number of banks which have folded up after getting R.F.C. money is startling. Out of fifty-two banks aided in Chicago, twenty have gone to the wall. It would be interesting to know in what cases, if any, R.F.C. money was used to help a few big insiders to get out with a whole skin, with little or no regard for the welfare of the ordinary run of depositors and stockholders. We hope that Congress will make a point of throwing more light on some of these transactions.

Hitler Wins

THE APPOINTMENT of Adolf Hitler to the chancellorship of Germany is a last resort of the German reactionaries. Only eight weeks ago von Hindenburg had refused to invest with full power a man whom, according to his political secretary, Dr. Meissner, the President could not trust "because he cannot look into one's eyes." The press argues that the Hitler Cabinet is a compromise forced upon the leader of the Nazis. But Hitler himself offered this compromise six months ago; he emphatically repudiated, at that time, the official version of his conversations with von Hindenburg, according to which he had demanded full power and the entire Cabinet. At no time had he asked for more than the chancellorship and such colleagues from other parties as would be amenable to his views. In fact, he negotiated with the Centrists, who are much further removed from his political outlook than his present associates. Certainly the government sworn in by the President last Monday fulfills this condition.

Every one of the new Ministers is nationalistic to the core, belongs to the military caste, is monarchistic and reactionary. Hitler's Cabinet is as truly representative of Junkerdom at its worst as any Cabinet assembled under the Hohenzollerns. The National Socialist party itself has three Ministers in key positions in the new government. Besides the Chancellor, Wilhelm Frick, chairman of the party's Reichstag group and former Minister in Thuringia, and Hermann Wilhelm Göring, president of the Reichstag, hold seats in the Cabinet. As Minister of the Interior the former controls the police and the appointment of all Reich officials; the latter, as Minister without portfolio and Commissar for Air Service, becomes acting Minister of the Interior

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for Prussia, with full control over the police and gendarmerie of that most important state. The heavy industries appear in the person of Franz von Papen, while three members of the von Schleicher Cabinet—von Neurath, Foreign Minister, Baron von Schwerin-Krosigk, Minister of Finance, and Baron Elz von Rübenach, Minister of Post and Transport—were taken over into the new Ministry. Dr. Gereke, Reichscommissar for the creation of employment, is also a holdover; the Reichswehr Minister, Lieutenant-General Werner von Blomberg, is a new figure in national politics.

Important additions are Alfred Hugenberg, leader of the German Nationalist People's party and multimillionaire owner of seventy-five newspapers, who becomes Minister of Economics and Food, and Franz Seldte, commander of the Steel Helmets, who was appointed Minister of Labor. Hugenberg's inclusion assumes added significance from the fact that it restores the Harzburg front. It was he who demanded, in his interview with Hindenburg on January 13, a super-party government with a political moratorium of at least one year, fully independent of the Reichstag and having a "homogeneous political-economic complexion that must express itself in the union of the Economic and Food Ministries." Hugenberg, like his American counterpart, "Buy American" Hearst, is a propagandist for the principle of national self-sufficiency. He demands the most stringent reduction of imports and the raising of tariffs on all food and agricultural products. By virtue of his office he becomes dictator over the distribution and price of foodstuffs. Franz Seldte, a wealthy Magdeburg manufacturer, is the founder of the strongest semi-military organization in Germany. His fitness for the Labor Ministry may be deduced from his past. He is a notorious opponent of organized labor, has, with the assistance of the Steel Helmets, broken strike after strike and joins the National Socialists in vigorous propaganda for conscripted labor service to solve Germany's unemployment problem. His inclusion in the new Cabinet is a pronounced challenge to the entire labor movement.

For weeks it was known that forces were at work to replace Kurt von Schleicher with a coalition of Hitlerites and von Papen followers. Accidentally the public learned of negotiations between Hitler and von Papen at the Cologne residence of Baron von Schröder, a prominent member of the Jewish firm of bankers, I. H. Stein, and closely connected with the Steel Cartel, which has financed the Hitler movement. It was also revealed that a representative of the heavy Ruhr industries had visited Hitler before Christmas. Von Schleicher's calculated endeavors to come to an understanding with the heads of the German Trade Union Federation turned the big industrialists against him.

The convocation of the Reichstag for February 7 indicates that the Cabinet will attempt to obtain a political moratorium. Its success will depend wholly on the Catholic Center, whose spokesmen have thus far given no definite expression of the course they intend to take. Dr. Frick, in a first official interview, insisted that the government would avoid dictatorial and unconstitutional measures and would refrain from the suppression of the Communist movement—promises that will have to be taken with more than a grain of salt. The Angriff, Göbbel's organ, is predicting a Fascist Germany within six months.

The labor movement is likewise assuming an attitude of watchful waiting. Communist handbills calling for a general strike are being distributed, but there seems to be no authoritative action. The Social Democracy counsels caution. Unity of action by labor, so urgently needed in this catastrophe, seems as far away as ever. According to present indications the German labor movement will take Fascist dictatorship on the chin. Fascism will have to produce a reorientation of political values and existing animosities will have to give way to an appreciation of mutual interests before there can be a counter-movement of the working masses. The liberal press is already adjusting itself to the new conditions, repeating the shameful performance of Italian liberalism after Mussolini's march on Rome. The anti-Fascist movement will need time for its crystallization.

One of Our Rulers

LEONOR F. LOREE, boss of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, having bought his way into the New York Central road, wants to become one of its directors. If he were applying for the job of office boy instead of director, the personnel department would want to know something about his record. If they found out that, as an office boy, he had done anything quite on a par with at least one of his performances as a railroad director, he would be tossed out of the window. However, there is one standard of ethics for office boys and another for directors. If you doubt it, draw up your chair while we tell you a little story about Mr. Loree.

He has now caused his Delaware and Hudson Railroad to buy 500,000 shares of New York Central stock and thus become its largest stockholder. Before that, however, he was ambitious to set up a great trunk line of his own with the Delaware and Hudson in the North and the Kansas City Southern in the South as the nucleus of the dream. Loree is chairman of the board of the Kansas City Southern as well as of the Delaware and Hudson. As part of this plan it was necessary to purchase stock control of some other railroads. Here is what he did.

September 25, 1924, as chairman of the Kansas City Southern board, he named a special committee to buy stocks in railroad companies in the Southwest. November 6 and 7, Loree bought *for his own account* 14,000 shares of Missouri, Kansas and

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Texas common at an average of $20.35 a share—total cost $285,872.14.

Four days later (November 11) the special committee began buying Missouri, Kansas and Texas stock for the Kansas City Southern. It bought 350,000 shares at an average price of $32. Total price, $12,000,000. Mr. Loree then sold his shares at prices ranging from $31.375 to $32.375. He made a profit on the deal of $144,707.

This was all secret and no one knew of it until in 1928 the facts came out in a hearing before the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Wall Street Journal commented on these strange facts, but no daily newspaper published any account of them. Forbes' Magazine, which is a champion of big business, referred cynically to this omission. "Why the newspapers remained mum," it observed, "prompts the unpleasant thought that apparently such stock jugglery does not impress them as anything worth recording."

The Wall Street Journal, July 27, 1928, thus analyzed Loree's conduct:

> The reason why Mr. Loree should not have bought stock in M. K. and T. for his personal account is that he contemplated purchasing M. K. and T. stock for the account of the Kansas City Southern of which he is the head.
>
> When the New York Stock Exchange discovered some years ago a broker trading on his own account against the interests of his clients he was expelled from the stock exchange with the stamp "obvious fraud." That broker, having an order to purchase shares, would first buy for himself, then, of course, at a higher price for his clients. It mattered not to whom he sold the stock later. He traded for his own account against the interest of his trust.
>
> Mr. Loree traded for his own account against the interest of his trust. That is the simple, plain and direct statement, if one must put a label on Mr. Loree's conduct.

The Wall Street Journal submitted the facts as disclosed by the I.C.C. to Mr. Loree for a statement. He declined to make any. Somewhat later the business community of New York City expressed its opinion of this performance by electing Mr. Loree president of the Chamber of Commerce.

We are now able to add the concluding chapter to this simple tale. A Boston lawyer, reading this story in The Wall Street Journal, remembered he was executor of an estate which held a large block of Kansas City Southern stock. He promptly wrote the directors asking an explanation and demanding that Loree account to the road for the profits he made in this deal. They submitted the demand to a well known New York lawyer who advised them that Mr. Loree's conduct was quite proper and the Board thereupon passed a resolution whitewashing him.

The Boston lawyer then notified Loree and the directors that he would institute a stockholders' suit to force Loree to disgorge his profits. As the suit would have to be brought in Missouri, the Boston lawyer engaged Senator James Reed to bring the suit. When it became known that the doughty Missouri Senator, famed for his ruthless and searching cross-examinations, was about to launch an attack, Mr. Loree, just as the bill in equity was about to be filed, caved in and paid the entire amount of his profit including interest to the railway company.

Mr. Loree now wants to be a director of the New York Central. Is this episode pertinent, as the Central directors weigh his qualifications for the job? Will the I.C.C. think it relevant as they consider the approval of such an election?

Ought not Senator Norbeck's committee, studying speculation, to look into this matter? Were there other persons, perhaps in banking circles, who also had advance information of the Kansas City Southern plans, who also profited? Furthermore, in the light of this transaction, would it not be wise to explore the movements of the New York Central stock during the period of acquiring these 500,000 shares?

George Saintsbury

IN THE controversy between the social and the non-social literary critics, one is sometimes puzzled by what seems to be an assumption on the part of the latter that there can be such a thing as a purely literary critic—a really first-rate writer who is a literary critic and nothing else.

Where can one find an example of such a critic? When one runs through the great names of criticism, they seem to fall into three categories. There is the philosopher like Aristotle whose literary criticism is merely the esthetic department of a comprehensive system of thought. There is the critic who writes a history of ideas from some special point of view—like Taine and the other nineteenth-century French writers of his type, as to whom, taking them as a whole, it is impossible to say whether they should be called literary critics or historians. With Michelet and Renan, their literary criticism is an inextricable part of their general histories; and with Sainte-Beuve, his literary criticism is an inextricable part of his biographies. Then finally there is the poet or dramatist or novelist who writes literary criticism to justify some particular kind of thing he is doing himself or to explain some movement to which he belongs. Coleridge and Bernard Shaw wrote criticism to put over the literary innovations of their contemporaries and themselves. In discussing the past, they usually emphasized in it the elements which had something in common with a new art which they themselves were creating. Dr. Johnson, in the "Lives of the Poets," was writing the history of a period of which he himself had been the last ornament. Matthew Arnold, as a critic of poetry, was in more or less the same position; and otherwise occupied himself

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principally with pointing out in other older critics and moralists a temper akin to his own.

There *are,* of course, literary critics who may be said to be nothing else, but in general they are writers of small caliber. They are the compilers of academic textbooks and the professional reviewers of the press. They have no ideas in particular about anything and they rarely achieve any particular distinction.

It must be admitted, however, that if it were possible for a great writer of this kind to exist, the late George Saintsbury would be he. Saintsbury did have strong political and moral principles—he was orthodox in religion and conservative in politics—but he did not allow them to affect his esthetic judgments. Nor did he belong to any esthetic school or movement: he aimed—and succeeded to an impressive degree—at appraising all schools and movements impartially. He objects as strongly as possible to the religious skepticism of Matthew Arnold and he remonstrates with him somewhat about it; yet he admires Arnold's skeptical poems. And though he describes Zola's "Travail" as "revolutionary or nothing, revolutionary 'in the most approved style,' as a certain apologist of robbery and murder put it not long ago"—it is the power of Zola's picture of modern industry which he emphasizes in describing it and not Zola's revolutionary views. Saintsbury did actually subordinate his own views to his purely literary judgment, which was both catholic and fine.

Furthermore, he had read everything. He was able truly to boast that he had never judged any of his subjects until all the evidence was in and that he had never uttered a second-hand opinion. The principal thrill of reading Saintsbury is the sensation of looking down at literature as with the comparative eye of God. And he had an original and most attractive literary style. One has seen stupid criticisms of Saintsbury which complained of the incongruity of a man's writing books on style when he had no style himself (wasn't it that Saintsbury in his book on prose rhythms deprecated his own style and that some of his readers took him seriously?) But the truth was that Saintsbury had invented something new in English style—the informal conversational method of which Mr. Ford Madox Ford has since become the principal exponent in English. The accent of Saintsbury's most learned works is that of a genial and leisurely after-dinner conversation, and this has sometimes—especially in academic circles—caused people to fail to appreciate both the thoroughness and scrupulousness of his criticism and the strength and precision of his prose rhythm, which carries off all the asides and cross-references and footnotes and nudges and jokes with unfaltering dignity and grace. The nice ear which made him an expert on the metrics of both poetry and prose is on every page of his own.

Yet with all these fine gifts of Saintsbury's, will anyone claim that he was a really important writer? Is not the effect of his criticism somehow weakened by the fact that we are surprised and disconcerted when we do find his extra-esthetic opinions cropping up? Should a man who deplores as a believer Matthew Arnold's disbelief in miracles smack his lips with quite so much gusto over the felicities of Arnold's poetry, which have their source in this disbelief? Should a man who applauds so complacently Zola's picture of "the grime and glare and scorch of the furnaces" and "the thirst and lust and struggles of their slaves" object to a freeing of the slaves as "robbery"? Note that it is not a question here of discounting the outgrown views of a past epoch: Arnold and Zola were Saintsbury's contemporaries. And his capacity for remaining indifferent in his consideration of current literature to the ideas which were agitating his time and as to which he professes himself otherwise not indifferent, really renders his work in the long run of rather secondary interest. It is not that his impartiality is not admirable: his critical sense of honor is, one supposes, one of the highest on record and hence a mild source of moral inspiration. But it seems impossible for such a writer to be, as Dr. Johnson or Coleridge or Matthew Arnold or Bernard Shaw was, a vital part of the thought of his time.

Saintsbury is a great connoisseur if you like, but not a great critic. He was also a connoisseur of wines and the impression he makes is not so very different whether he is writing about wines or books. You admire the fineness of his palate; you acquire a certain amount of information. He filters out the essence of his subject and gives you a little to try. He is good to look into for an account of somebody like the poet Cleveland or Restif de la Bretonne, as to whom you may feel a faint curiosity but whom you would never get to the point of reading. He is good to read before going to sleep when you are tired and don't want to make much effort, or when waiting for your number to come up at the Public Library. You are always glad to hear his voice; you feel that he is a fine old fellow; you reflect that he knows his stuff as very few of them nowadays do. And it is sad to have heard he was dead.

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What Happened to Radio Stock

I: Insiders Form a Pool

MR. HOOVER said a good many foolish things during his late Gethsemane, such as his warnings about the imminence of the gold collapse, the crash of the American system and the coming grass crop in our city streets. But he uttered one very solid and unpleasant truth for the benefit of those who blamed the national government for our late speculative wickedness. He asked us to remember that the heart and center of that speculative rage was in New York State. What has the state of New York done about it? What is it going to do about it?

However, for the edification of those who hold to that futile dream of self-rule in business, I would like to offer another question or two. What is business going to do about it? What, for instance, is the Stock Exchange going to do about some of the abuses lately brought to light? What are our great corporations, whose managers had a hand in some of those abuses, going to do about it?

To bring the whole matter down to brass tacks, what are the federal government, the state government, the Stock Exchange and the corporation involved going to do about such goings-on as have been recently uncovered in the now famous radio-stock pool? Everyone who has followed stock-market history knows of this unsavory episode. It is probable, however, that few knew the full story as revealed by the United States Senate subcommittee which is still studying the business of stock-market operations. The full report has only just been made up. The facts therein reported I have supplemented with some additional data which help to explain and enliven them.

The Radio Corporation of America does not need to be identified. The stock control was held by the General Electric Company and the Westinghouse Electric Company. But a very large part of the 1,500,000 shares of common stock were held by the public. The company had, I am informed, about 25,000 public stockholders. It may be well to interpose here the observation that the distinguished citizens who directed its affairs were the representatives of those 25,000 stockholders—trustees of their interests.

Back in 1921 the common stock sold at from 1½ to 2½. As radio broadcasting expanded its operations, this stock continued to rise until at one time in 1927 it reached 101. In 1928, however, when the general madness moved towards its flood, Radio soared from 85¼ in February to 420 in December. This was not accomplished without substantial aid from a group of professional market operators who in those frantic days rode the whirlwind and directed the storm. During 1928 sales equaled ten times the whole number of shares outstanding. A busy pool, originated, I surmise, by Mr. Tom Bragg and Mr. Bernard Smith, two audacious traders, but managed by Michael Meehan, the broker, had gone through several frenzied crises in radio trading and had acquired a kind of dubious fame in Wall Street.

At this time our financial wizards who were carrying forward the holy war on poverty from Wall Street were planning, as a preliminary to the chicken in every pot, a batch of stock certificates in every clothes closet. The ingenuity of those resourceful economists, our corporation lawyers, was sorely taxed to invent new devices for whipping up the stock-buying mania. One of those worked overtime was the stock split-up. So the patriotic financiers managing Radio split up their $420 common five for one, to bring the price within the reach of the humblest laundress. Stock split-ups always produced an invigorating effect upon the market activity of even the most vigorous issue.

At the moment when this split-up came, the book value of Radio was not over $37.50. Its actual value was a pure gamble. The eminent economist and market engineer, Mr. Raskob, had laid down the valuation law that a stock should sell at fifteen times its earnings. The earnings of Radio in the extraordinary year of 1928 were about $15.98 a share. Even under the Raskob "law," which belongs to the realm of "cock-eyed" or chicken-in-the-pot economics, the stock should have been selling for not more than $239. As a matter of fact, it was selling for twenty-seven times its earnings, or nearly twice its Raskobian value, which brought it definitely within the Coolidgian, Mellonian and Hooverian economic system, so learnedly exemplified by the works of Professor Irving Fisher of Yale, Dr. Samuel Insull of Athens and Chancellor Wolf of Wall Street. One might suppose that the great financiers ruling Radio would be alarmed at this unwarranted rise in the stock price and the well known stories of the syndicate escapades with Radio. But apparently they were not, for they put another trump card in the gamblers' hands by voting a five-to-one split-up in February. The 1,500,000 "A" common shares were reclassified into 7,500,000 and trading in the new shares began before reclassification was complete.

At this moment Mr. Michael Meehan decided to organize another pool. Of course he immediately brought in his merry pals, Tom Bragg, Bernard Smith, Percy Rockefeller and Bradford Ellsworth. Many other notables were included. There were

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Professor Raskob himself, Walter P. Chrysler, the Fisher Brothers, Nicholas Brady, W. A. Kenny, W. C. Durant, Charlie Schwab and many well known bankers and industrialists. The most interesting member of the pool, however, was Mrs. Michael Meehan for 65,000 shares, with a deposit of $1,000,000. There were about forty persons in the pool. Meehan's brokerage firm called in two others to assist in the job—W. E. Hutton and Company and Block, Maloney and Company. About $12,000,000 in cash was deposited with Meehan. The agreement was signed March 7 and the pool was ready to go to work.

Let us settle down now and watch the boys as they extract $5,000,000 from the "idiots," as Mr. Hoover calls them, in less than two weeks.

Meehan, who commanded this raid, was the specialist in Radio, that is to say, he was a floor broker who specialized in the buying and selling of some one stock. Any broker will execute an order for you if you are willing to buy or sell at the prevailing market price. But if you fix a price, to buy below the market or sell above it, your broker will transmit the order to the specialist. The latter remains always at the post where that stock is traded and can execute an order at the proper price the moment that price is reached.

This specialist has orders to buy and sell at all sorts of prices. The "sell" orders appear in his book in one column, the "buy" orders in another. He has only to look at that book to know the extent, at any moment, of the supply and demand at various prices; to know, in short, the precise state of the market. This information may be valuable to anyone who wishes to manipulate the market. Obviously no specialist ought to be permitted to engage in a pool operation. Yet on the Exchange almost every pool of any consequence employs the specialist because of this very information. The Stock Exchange has a rule prohibiting a specialist from revealing the information he has, but we shall see how this is observed.

With the syndicate agreement signed on the seventh, the pool was ready to begin with the stage beautifully set. On March 2 the annual statement of the Radio Corporation of America was printed, giving a flowery picture of the future. On March 3 market sales were moderate—about 55,000 shares of the new stock. On March 8, however, 630,000 shares of Radio were traded on the Stock Exchange. Undoubtedly Meehan had begun the accumulation of stock. Prices ranged from 80 to 89.

On March 8, Wall Street buzzed with rumors of a merger deal between Radio and Western Union. Next day The New York World printed these reports, but carried a denial of the rumor. The denials were well calculated, however, to feed the flames. David Sarnoff, vice-president of the Radio Corporation of America, then in Europe, was reported to have had several conferences with Newcomb Carlton of the Western Union. The deal is "off for the present," said the report, and "it is up to the Western Union to resume negotiations." The news reports made a great deal of the fact that Sarnoff in London had just acquired for the Radio Corporation, through the British Gramophone interests, the Marconi Phone Company in England. Radio was reported as "vigorously pushing its plans for further entrance into the amusement field, such as motion pictures and talkies . . . and also continues its work on important television patents."

On March 14 The World printed the picture of three men returning from Europe. One was Newcomb Carlton, of the Western Union, who admitted that the "communications merger between Radio Corporation and Western Union Telegraph Company now is being discussed but with no definite decision in sight."

Other papers, including The Wall Street Journal and some tipster sheets, printed other items which had the effect of lashing the popular appetite. Meehan and his broker allies worked meantime with feverish haste. When in the future you are told that a mere handful of men cannot manipulate our vast market, just remember these figures. I give below three columns of figures. The first records the number of shares of Radio stock traded on the Exchange on the day indicated. The second refers to the number of shares sold that day by the Radio pool. The third gives the number of shares bought by the Radio pool.

	Trading	*Sold by pool*	*Bought by pool*
March 12	343,400	392,600	246,000
" 13	330,600	106,900	152,400
" 14	562,400	69,000	142,800
" 15	675,700	209,400	186,000
" 18	637,100	210,500	449,100

The fact that pool sales and purchases on some days exceeded total trading is doubtless explained by the fact that the pool figured in the buying and selling of the same shares and perhaps traded in some shares off the floor. While the pool was operating, it bought 1,493,400 shares for $141,424,328.52 and sold the same number for $146,978,527. After deducting expenses, its profits amounted to $4,924,078.

These sales reveal some interesting data. For instance, on March 15 the pool sold 25,000 shares at 101. The same day, J. E. Higgins, a broker who was a member of the pool, bought 25,000 shares at 101. On March 12 Meehan sold for the pool 1,000 shares to Hutton and Company for the account of Mrs. Vera Bragg, who was also in the pool. Bragg has admitted his wife knew nothing of this and that it may have been done to conceal a wash sale. On March 14 Meehan sold 5,000 shares to Hutton and Company, who bought them for what was carried on their books as Ac-

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count Number 125. This was a concealed name for Bradford Ellsworth, one of the pool managers.

Meantime, Wall Street was aflame with excitement, with rumors, with frenzied trading on the floor as brokers almost tore each other apart to get in their bids while Meehan pushed up from 80 to 107½ the split-up Radio shares which had a book value of only $7.50. Here we see the presence of insiders in the pool; the use of inside information for timing it right; the management of the specialist; the artful use of publicity and rumor; the buying and selling at the same time to affect prices and stimulate activity. We see Meehan selling 392,600 shares in a day and buying 246,000 shares the same day. Then we see the pool end its operations and withdraw from the market as the stock slips quickly back to 87. A newspaper note in a journal which happened to be singularly right during this whole incident reported that the insiders were advising their friends to buy Radio back as soon as it sank to 85, and when it did sink to 85 the same journal reported that a strong covering movement by shorts supported the stock. In other words, the insiders sold short as the stock sank after the pool support had been withdrawn, and covered on the way down. Thereafter they organized another pool and pushed the stock up once again in that year to 114, on September 12. In this year, 1929, its earnings were $1.58 a share, so that it sold for seventy-two times its current earnings. When that point was reached, just ahead loomed unseen the Great Split-up, the grim Pay Day of October, 1929, when the great dream of abolishing poverty with Wall Street bubble money dissolved about the ears of Mr. Hoover. Radio, just purchased by thousands of suckers for 114, promptly settled to 26, then to 11½ the next year; to 2½ in 1931. At the end of 1932, it stood at around 4, which is still about forty-four times its earnings of last year.

This is speculation. This is a pool, carried on, remember, not by blue-sky outlaws, but by a group of our leading citizens. Every man who bought a share of stock from the boosters in that bull pool has lost 95 percent of his money. The profits were distributed among some of the patriots who now labor on our relief and unemployment committees.

Now then, what has been done and what is going to be done about it? First, by the Stock Exchange. Richard Whitney, president of the Stock Exchange, assured the Senate Committee that no specialist would dare reveal the information on his book "because there are very stringent rules with regard to the actions of a specialist." But when a man is both specialist and manager of a pool, the revelation of what is on the book is more or less automatic. There is a section in the Constitution of the Exchange which provides that no specialist shall buy or sell *directly or indirectly* for his own account or that of a partner or for any account in which either has a direct or indirect interest, securities which, as a specialist, he has an order to buy or sell. How under this rule can a specialist be the manager of a pool or a participant in one?

What has the Stock Exchange done about Mr. Meehan? Or is this rule a joke? Or does the Exchange believe that a specialist can run a pool, put his participation in his wife's name and then buy and sell for the pool the stock in which he is a specialist? Does the Stock Exchange believe the public is made up of unmitigated saps? They have some ground for such a suspicion, but they also have some recent evidence that this is a dangerous assumption. Is this a sample of self-rule in business?

Next, what is the state of New York going to do about it? New York is the heart of our whole speculative organism. Speculation is effectively within the reach of our state laws. Is this vast power over the ownership of our industries, the regulation of our credit, the solvency of our banks, the stability of our whole financial system, to continue under the secret and undisturbed control of a small group of private persons who have proved their unfitness, or at least their utter inability, to manage this important function in our economic life?

As for the federal government, it at least has begun to study the matter. Let us hope that study will not end until some remedial action is taken.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

II: Mr. Owen D. Young Replies

Mr. Flynn's article was shown, in advance of publication, to Mr. Owen D. Young, who has written the following reply.—THE EDITORS.

I am glad to respond to your invitation that I comment on Mr. Flynn's article on speculation in the shares of the Radio Corporation. Certainly it is true that this speculative mania, so quick and sweeping in its contagion, is second only to war in its destructiveness. I am glad that Mr. Flynn is lending his incisive pen to the business of analyzing the nature of the disease and of its devastation. The article calls for general comment from me only for the purpose of adding some additional facts and supplying another point of view.

First, let me suggest that as speculation becomes epidemic, few persons, in the nature of things, are likely to be more apprehensive than responsible corporate managers. When a volatile market prices the shares of their companies at levels which at best can show only small returns to the shareholders and discounts the future growth of the company for many years ahead, it puts upon management a very heavy and unnecessary strain. It is then difficult to meet the expectation of shareholders even in good

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times, and when business turns bad it is certain to make the managers the target of violent criticism.

Second, given the speculative mania, what stock, in the nature of things, would most excite the fever of the speculators? Because of its novelty and its mystery, because of its spectacular advance both technically and commercially, because of its daily demonstration to the people not only of this country but of all civilized countries that the impossible was in fact possible, because, in short, it had captured the imagination of the world, radio was bound to be a belle of the party. This, of course, management could not help. It could not stay the rapid progress of the art as it developed month by month. It could not conceal it, even though it might deplore the excessive welcome accorded to each disclosure. No report of the Radio Corporation was ever made which did not reflect the facts of its condition correctly. The times were rife with rumors which sent speculative fever up. Certainly the management did not inspire them, and where there was no basis in fact they were promptly denied. There were, of course, important and natural developments—the Victor Company was taken over, and as part of the same transaction the Victor Company's interest in the British Gramophone Company was acquired. There was no concealment or exploitation of any of these facts. Only the truth was told by the management.

In the case of the Radio Corporation, the leader in this new industry, the problem was intensified by the relatively small supply of shares on the market. This, of course, was owing to the fact that the General Electric and Westinghouse companies held large blocks of its stock which were not for sale. If the electrical companies were to continue to develop their radio business through the Radio Corporation, obviously they would not sell their shares any more than they would sell any other segregated part of their own business. The market supply was therefore easier to control in any speculative undertaking. There were only two ways of increasing the supply. One was for the General Electric and Westinghouse companies to sell, await the explosion of the speculative bubble and then buy back. The other was to increase by split-up the number of shares on the market. If the two electrical manufacturing companies had sold at a very high price and bought back at a very low price they could well have been charged with connivance with the speculators to fleece the public for their own profit. Of course this was not done. The shares were split up, in the judgment at the time that it was the best way to meet a difficult situation. Even looking back on it now, it is far from clear that the split-up was unwise under the conditions in which it was made.

Third, it may well be asked, and I have frequently heard it asked, why management at such a time does not frankly disclose its apprehensions and so dampen the speculative ardor before it is too late. Well, one answer is that an inflamed public would have paid no more attention to a pessimistic statement in 1928 or 1929 than a skeptical people now pay to an optimistic one. Both, in my judgment, are thoroughly ineffectual. Moreover, I do not believe that corporate management should make statements to the public at any time for the purpose of influencing the price of its company's shares. The business of management is to disclose the facts which faithfully reflect the company's condition. The valuation which the public may put on the shares of the company is outside its province. In fact it has been often said, and with truth, that corporate managers, although familiar with the conditions of the corporation, are the poorest judges of the market value of the shares. For one reason, it is said, they are too close to the picture to see it in true perspective. So the market will accept their statement of condition but not their opinion of value.

OWEN D. YOUNG.

Putting the Cabinet to Work

WHY a Cabinet? And if a Cabinet, why not a secretariat?

Interest in President-elect Roosevelt's Cabinet will become more and more intense until he announces the names of the ten persons who will form his official family. He will choose them from a list which perhaps numbers two hundred, and will make his selection not alone on the basis of ability, but because of the accident of residence, and the advocacy which certain aspirants and their friends are able to muster. The first meeting of the ten who constitute the family will be much photographed and commented on; but in attracting such attention the Cabinet will make almost the only claim that it can make as an institution. There will follow the announcement that a certain day has been selected for regular meetings but, unless there is a sharp break with custom, the Cabinet as an institution will then sink into what another Democratic President (in another connection) called innocuous desuetude.

For the American Cabinet has no legal existence. Based entirely on custom, it is no more than an amorphous body of the heads of the executive departments. If the President is powerful enough, he can keep these heads, or certain of them, from being much more than chief clerks. During vacations and the campaigns which come biennially, few of the Cabinet will be in Washington. There may be no family gathering for weeks on end, but the public business will go on just the same. When the Secretaries are available for meetings the President

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may prefer not to call them. He may reach important decisions without consulting them. Even when there is pending unsettled some problem of grave importance, the Cabinet may meet and may discuss only trivial matters. Revelations from the dark interior of certain Cabinets—those from President Wilson's are the most recent—show that the President may refuse to announce his intentions in respect of important matters. President Wilson, for example, failed to bring before his Cabinet for discussion some of the notes which he was sending to Germany in 1915 and 1916. The Secretaries got their information from the newspapers at the same time as did the public. If a President announced that his Cabinet would never meet, public opinion might be alarmed, but so long as the pretense of an institution is maintained, opinion is content, and it is not until later that one is able to learn the extent to which the Cabinet has been ignored.

There should, nevertheless, be no popular mistaking of the pretense. Institutionally, the American Cabinet is inchoate. It is much more informal and may be made much more useless than is possible in the case of any European Cabinet. This is true even though or (perhaps it would be more accurate to say) because the American presidency is the most powerful elective office in the world. The authority which is concentrated in the President's hands has become so great and so widely ramified that it is likely to be beyond the power of one man, however able, to exercise efficiently. In controlling those whom he appoints to particular offices the President must act politically and personally, rather than institutionally or legally; for the American President is not a chief of the executive. That he should not be has been deliberately intended by Congress, which has conferred a good deal of power on the Secretaries and other officials. Yet because he appoints to these offices the President, even though he possesses no legal control over decisions, is held responsible politically for all acts of omission or commission. These he can influence only by influencing the persons who perform the acts. If these persons go counter to the President's wishes he can remove them from office.

In other systems of government the situation is different. Elsewhere administrative decisions to be legal must be made through machinery which enables those politically accountable for the decisions to understand what is proposed and to determine whether they wish to accept responsibility. The British executive, for example, acts through the King in Council, and the Privy Council includes those who are politically responsible. Unless they consent, the legal machinery does not work. Administrative decisions in France and in Germany are taken by presidential decrees with ministerial countersignature. These three countries also have Cabinet government and this means, with varying gradations, that the executive power is exercised through a group rather than an individual. It may be that a Prime Minister like Lloyd George or Poincaré will dominate a Cabinet so that for the time being there is something approaching the personal government which we have in the United States. But the Prime Minister must consult, the Cabinet must approve, and the political responsibility is joint rather than individual. In other words, the exercise of executive power elsewhere is not so segregated legally as it is in the United States. Elsewhere also power is shared politically; here it is concentrated in a single person.

One result for our system is what is described as the "tremendous burden" of the presidential office —a burden which, despite the division of power with the state governments, is greater than that which falls on any Prime Minister. Nor can this burden be shared with the Cabinet so long as its meetings are causeries or informal discussions, rather than deliberations to isolate a policy for collective approval. Enough is known about the details of Cabinet meetings to justify the assertion that business comes before the Cabinet in a most vagarious way—because of the desire of the President to have advice on particular matters or because of the willingness of the Secretaries to submit certain problems for the discussion of their associates. Sometimes there are differences of opinion as to whether matters have actually been before the Cabinet or not. Thus it was the clear recollection of Secretary of State Hughes that the Harding Cabinet had never considered the proposed oil leases. But, on the other hand, some of those concerned in the oil leases maintained that they had been discussed in a Cabinet meeting. Certain it was, however, that mention of the leases, if made, was informal and that there was no documentation to aid the Secretaries who were not familiar with the subject in reaching intelligent conclusions.

Down to the War the British Cabinet had been an informal body. But since its members shared political responsibility there was a guarantee that important matters would be presented for discussion. When he became Prime Minister in December, 1916, Mr. Lloyd George set up a Cabinet secretariat which, in characteristic British fashion, was permitted to have Topsy's genetic processes. There were no detailed stipulations as to what the secretariat should do. The French government also found that a secretariat was desirable. Action was at first informal. A ministerial decree designated an Under-secretary of State to act as Secretary to the Cabinet. Later the national passion for logical completeness resulted in different stipulations by successive ministries of the functions which the Cabinet secretariat should perform. In general the secretariat was instructed to prepare the agenda for Cabinet meetings; to document the problems coming up for discussion and decision; to record the decisions taken and communicate them to the interested officials; to maintain a liaison with the parliamentary commissions having jurisdiction over matters on which the Cabinet acted; and to arrange for

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the study by the departments and by outside specialists of technical questions with which, later, the Cabinet would have to deal. The British agency performed the same tasks, save in respect of the parliamentary commissions which the House of Commons does not have. Most of the special constitutional and administrative devices which the War made necessary have gone by the board, but both the British and French Cabinets still have secretariats and no one would propose that they be abandoned.

Why could not an American agency, with at least some of the functions of a full-blown secretariat, perform a useful service? It would certainly contribute toward institutionalizing the Cabinet and thereby make it more of an organ of government instead of a peripatetic meeting of the President and his department heads. This is not to suggest that the Cabinet should be institutionalized legally or that the authority of the President should be shared with the Cabinet. To be sure, in time, that result might gradually come about and it might be considered desirable; but the present point is simply that if meetings of the American Cabinet are to be held at all—and the country would be alarmed if they were permanently abandoned—there would seem to be every reason for enabling the meetings to be efficient. The President could decide what records should be kept. On some matters he might desire to have the general opinion of the Cabinet noted. On other matters he might have contrary desires. Clearly there should be no record kept of individual opinions, for that would destroy freedom of discussion. At the outset an American secretariat would do little more than prepare for Cabinet meetings and effect liaisons with the departments or agencies which can contribute to the understanding of pending problems and which should be informed in some cases of the courses of action which have been approved.

It may be said, of course, that the President's personal secretarial staff can (or even does) study and document pending proposals and keep some kind of liaison with Congress. This may be true, but the fact is that pending proposals usually involve administrative departments. There is hardly a question before an administration which does not in some important fashion touch on the activities of one of the departments. Most of the legislation in which the President concerns himself is of interest to one or more departments. Increasingly the bills which Congress considers are initiated by the administration. More and more the President is judged, not on his record as an efficient administrator, but on the legislative program which he presents and argues for. The President, indeed, has become more of a chief legislator than a chief executive. In the former, more important role a President could obtain greater assistance from a secretary to the Cabinet than he can obtain now through any personal secretary who has only haphazard contacts with the Secretaries or with congressional committees.

There are other angles to the problem which the administrative set-up of the American government makes of some importance. Thus, in the United States, the fact that acts to be legal need not be performed in the name of a single person or through a particular body results in a bewildering variety of administrative regulations in different forms. The complaint has long been made that the rulings of Washington departments are always difficult to ascertain, that they are often poorly drafted and that they too frequently conflict with each other. In England an annual volume is published consisting of statutory rules and orders—the grist of the King in Council. In the United States there is no similar compilation. An extremely useful service would be done the public and the administration itself if there were some central agency which had a complete record of all action taken by rule-making authorities. In Great Britain such a record is kept by the Clerk of the Privy Council, but it happens that the incumbent of this office—Sir Maurice Hankey—is also the head of the Cabinet secretariat. An American Cabinet secretariat would be a fitting agency to collect the scattered administrative legislation of the different departments. At present, however, no one person knows how the departments and independent commissions are using their powers of administrative legislation.

Second, there is in Washington no central statistical service. The deliberate creation of such a new service would be of doubtful utility unless it were done (and this is improbable) as part of a scheme of complete governmental reorganization. But certainly there could be some agency which, with the assistance of certain of the bureaus already in existence, would attempt to amass current information on the high spots of governmental activity so far as it is translatable into figures. During the War it was recognized that this task was an important one and special services were set up so that, for war problems at least, there was kept up to date a statistical conspectus of everything that was happening. A Cabinet secretariat could undertake a similar task for the major problems which will continue to be pressing. The results could not fail to be an improvement over the present situation, which is that to find out things, the outsider—or the President himself—must frequently appeal to half a dozen sources of information.

Finally, as the business of government becomes more complex and as the proppings up and interference with private undertakings are more numerous and widespread, resort to extragovernmental agencies will be more frequent. Up until now various commissions have been appointed, groups of economists have been called in on this or that and business and industrial interests have been appealed to for opinions on pending matters. These extra-

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governmental persons or bodies have worked directly with the President's office. In all these cases liaison with a Cabinet secretariat would have been more effective. For the fact is that most of the problems stretch into the different departments of the government.

There has been some talk recently of national economic councils and of various extragovernmental advisory groups which may be called into existence by the incoming administration. If any experiment along these lines is contemplated—and it should not be too grandiose—a Cabinet secretariat could try it to best advantage. There are in the civil service reservoirs of intelligent thinking on governmental problems which are frequently overlooked and which are never drawn upon in any planned and orderly fashion. The proper articulation of expert advice from extragovernmental persons with the expert advice of permanent officials is one of the most important but as yet one of the most neglected problems of efficient public administration. Armies and navies have general staffs, but only feeble efforts have been made toward staff work on the peace problems confronting modern governments.

If the innovation of a Cabinet secretariat were attempted, beginnings could be tentative. One of the President's three secretaries or his "administrative assistant" could undertake the task. Any personnel which he required could be drawn from the different departments. No additional expenditure would be necessary. The imagination and tact of the person in charge would determine the lines on which the secretariat would develop and the success with which it would perform, at first perhaps some, and later perhaps all, of the functions suggested above. Who will say that these functions are not important? No private business undertaking of any size would dream of permitting a board of directors to be as informal and as impromptu as the American Cabinet. Since the government of the United States is now the world's most important and complex business undertaking, should its board of directors be informal and impromptu? A President of the United States who made his Cabinet efficient would not weaken his authority or share his responsibility. The "tremendous burden" of his office would not be lessened but he would be better able to bear it.

LINDSAY ROGERS.

The Social Muse Once More

In the issue of October 26, 1932, there appeared a poem by Archibald MacLeish, "Invocation to the Social Muse," in which Marxia—for that must be the Muse's name—was generally vilified and poets were compared to camp-followers who "must sleep with stragglers from either prince or of both views."

The poem called forth emphatic rejoinders, a selection from which was printed in the issue of December 14. Since the controversy still rages, we are printing a further selection of prose and poetry bearing upon it. Most of the contributors, this time, are on Mr. MacLeish's side of the argument, though Selden Rodman defends the Social Muse, and Rolfe Humphries casts a murrain or plague on both the houses or camps where the poets or doxies are sleeping.
—THE EDITORS.

SIR: Archibald MacLeish's "Invocation to the Social Muse" is an admirable poem. Furthermore, it says something that needed very much to be said at this time when every force, including a fear for his own skin, urges the poet to take political sides. It is too often assumed that if a poet does not mix in politics, he is refusing in some cowardly fashion to face life, and that, if once engaged, he does not take up an extreme position, he is not only a poltroon, but an ignoramus. The truth is, a poet has shown enough courage if he can face his own life. And it requires a great ignorance of literary history not to be aware that politics is the besetting sin of poets and one which has done them and their craft more harm than all forms of drunkenness and debauchery put together.

For having yielded to that temptation, the Tuscans suffered exile, the Tudor poets decapitation and the liberal poets of the nineteenth century extinction through rhetoric. Think of what "Paradise Lost" might have been had John Milton not attached himself to the warty Cromwell and wasted the best years of his life! Nor are recent examples more edifying. Louis Aragon has only yielded to his own already excessive love of violence in putting himself at the service of the revolution, and I notice that Yessenin and Mayakovsky found that once on the extreme left there was no place to go but toward suicide. Nor is it recorded that politics has benefited much by their intrusion.

There is a way for the poet, as there is for the novelist, to write of political events. There is "Coriolanus," there is "The Possessed." The one is a dramatic poem, the other a novel. They have no immediate interest. Mr. MacLeish deserves the highest praise for his stand that a poet should attend to his business, which is writing poems, at a time when so many have deserted literature to engage in polemics. For it would be, I think, a mistake to describe the American Communists as engaged in political activity when what they are really doing is indulging themselves in an intellectual coma and letting two other men, both dead, do their thinking for them.

Orgeval, France. JOHN PEALE BISHOP.

SIR: Here is a quotation which seems to bear directly on the controversy aroused by Mr. MacLeish's poem. It is taken from "Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards," by Joseph C. Walker (Dublin, 1786).

> Diod. Siculus informs us, in his account of the Gauls, that when armies were ready to engage, if their Bards but came between them, they immediately put

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an end to the battle; as if their warriors were so many wild beasts, which they had charmed by the power of their songs. This extraordinary power was possessed in an eminent degree by the Irish Bards. We will select one instance from many.— In the celebrated contention for precedence between Fin and Goll, near Fin's palace at Almhain, the attending Bards observing the engagement to grow very sharp, were apprehensive of the consequence, and determined, if possible, to cause a cessation of hostilities. To effect this, they shook the *Chain of Silence,* and flung themselves amongst the ranks, extolling the sweets of peace, and the achievements of the combatants' ancestors. Immediately both parties laying down their arms, listened with attention to the harmonious lays of their Bards; and in the end, rewarded them with precious gifts. This circumstance has been celebrated in an ancient Legend called "Bruigan Beag na H'Almuine."

The person of the bard was sacred.

New York City. M. Wood Hill.

SIR: Literature, like all other things in America outside of the life-insurance business and Mr. Roger Babson, is facing a crisis. Politicians are fortunate in having three choices: they can continue along the golden path to prosperity or collapse, they can swing to the left and demand a radically different society, or they can compromise with existing order and try to reform it. Literature has only two ways to turn: *it cannot reform.*

Most of the established writers in America have come to their maturity in the last days of America's material grandeur. They have found their themes (and rightly) either in the struggle for power among the industrial rulers or in the contrast between provincial Main Street and cosmopolitan New York. A few of these writers like Theodore Dreiser and John Dos Passos look beyond the encounter to the inevitable breakdown. But today an entirely new generation is facing an accomplished fact. Their country is no longer a land of great vulgarity yet infinite vigor and promise. Writers can no longer speak in the healthy ridicule of a Mencken or the remote irony of a Cabell. This new generation must take immediately the position of the disinterested observer, who accepts and thereby aligns himself with a decaying order—or else openly espouse a radically different spiritual cause.

Archibald MacLeish's poem illustrates the dilemma of the artist who still maintains the defense of "art for art's sake," but at the same time has too much intellectual honesty to accept American capitalism:

> Does Madam recall our responsibilities? We are
> Whores Fräulein: poets Fräulein are persons of
> Known vocation following troops: they must sleep with
> Stragglers from either prince or of both views.
>
> There are only a handful of things a man likes
> Generation to generation hungry or
> Well fed: the earth's one, life's
> One: Mister J. P. Morgan is not one.
>
> Is it just to demand of us also to bear arms?

This poem may state the position of the generation that has just had its say, but it represents none the less exactly what the present generation, which has so far said very little, must face. Is the writer to acknowledge himself a whore following troops, drifting back and forth between the armies of exploitation and equality? Or is he justified in finding a theme worthy of the spirit and ignoring the worn-out forces of a spineless, spiritless system? History is not exactly void of examples of the poet who did not consider himself a disinterested observer. Dante's "Divine Comedy," which Mr. MacLeish quotes on the fly-leaf of his "Conquistador" is from beginning to end a frank and fanatical espousal of the particular political-religious credo that Dante carried with him throughout his hunted and arm-bearing career. Milton, in "Paradise Lost" as well as in "Lycidas," spoke in thinly veiled terms of the exploiters and reactionaries of his day. Aeschylus bore arms at Salamis and later wrote a patriotic play about it. And so with Shelley, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Voltaire, Alexander Blok and countless others.

"Art," says Trotsky in that extraordinary book "Literature and Revolution," "even the purest art, is thoroughly teleological because if it breaks with great aims, no matter how unconsciously felt by the artist, it degenerates into a mere rattle." The rattling quality of American art today is more evident than the rattling of the politicians and the subways. Supernatural religion no longer holds sway over the imagination of the scientific age. Science while it remains uncontrolled by man, enslaves; does not enrich, make free. Within the capitalist closed circle there can no longer be great aims or singers of great aims.

I would disagree violently with the short-sighted critic who maintains that bourgeois culture never can produce great art and that all art must be proletarian, Marxist. Art *must* be nothing at all. It is great or it is not. If the artist finds genuinely inspiring subject matter in capitalist society, in a society of slaves and kings, or in any other society, he will rise to the occasion—provided he is an artist. The question is simply whether he can any longer find matter at hand worthy even of his indignation. Lewis, Dreiser and Dos Passos have set the seal of realistic satire upon a crumbling order. Proust and Joyce have said the last word about the bourgeois and the artist. It now remains for the final destructive gesture to be made, and the call to hope and action sounded.

New York City. Selden Rodman.

SIR: Mr. MacLeish's "Invocation to the Social Muse" has drawn responses whose content is scarcely commensurate with the indignation of the correspondents. Mr. MacLeish said that the poets were whores, and even though he explicitly included himself in this modest profession, he gave great offense. It seems that the poets do not like to be called whores, and some of them have written to the editor.

Mr. Tate says that the poets are not whores, and presents his views in a remarkably fine poem whose classical allusions and punctuation are equally unintelligible, and whose statements are nothing so much as adroitly oracular. However, Mr. Tate claims that the poets are neither *femmes de guerre* nor *hors de combat;* moreover, they are sometimes priests. Mr. Platt does not comprehend the abrupt sexual metamorphosis that overtakes one of Mr. MacLeish's bards, and in truth Mr. MacLeish is much

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to blame for the violent exercise of his fancy which turns poets from whores to whoremasters in a few brief verses. Mr. Bishop thinks that Mr. MacLeish is all right. Miss Welch does not think so. They both are lucid and unpretentious in their views; the lady does protest too much. Mr. Rodman has contributed to the occasion some very inspiring verses.

Spirited and varied as their letters are, none of these poets and critics fully apprehends why they are so indignant. All they know is, the shot came so near hitting that it shocked them; they cry out in alarm and resentment. Still, Mr. MacLeish muffed his metaphor. His trope would have lost in conciseness, but gained in precision, had he written that the poets were no whores, but kept women (*i. e.,* not proletarians, but bourgeoises). It behooves them to evince a proper class pride; it is easier for them to conceive of themselves romantically than realistically. Therefore, they profess and call themselves priests, warriors, camp-followers, ivory-tower people, God knows what, instead of what they are—namely, artists. They sentimentalize about the artist's function, rather than strictly meditate it. *"The poet does not aim to excite—that is not even a test of his success—but to set something down."* Put that in italics, please; take a good look at it: and whether or not you consider Mr. T. S. Eliot the Jesus Christ of the critical world, you will have to admit that when he wrote it, he said a mouthful.

To get back to this business of being kept. Leisure for art, that is to say, a surplus of time and energy over what is necessarily consumed by the demands of keeping satisfactorily alive, is indispensable to the artist. As long as we have a class society, the artist must, by hook or crook, get himself attached to the class that has the gift of leisure in its power to bestow. This relationship is not in itself disgraceful; if the master class is young, strong, intelligent, rich, spiritual, respected, and so on, the artist may justly glory in the association. On the other hand, when your honored lord becomes old and fat, corpulent, senile, queasy, gross and impotent, and you know you can't get away from him, you have very good reasons for locking yourself in your room, throwing tantrums and draining bottles. You may or may not help yourself and your art by these means, but if you use them as ends, you will achieve a kind of self-expression.

Another point: as long as the master class is an owning class, the poets will be bourgeois poets; their language, like their thought, will be bourgeois. They will think of themselves in the terminology current among bourgeois people: *e. g.,* Milton, at one end of an era, and Mr. Tate at the other (the incongruity is not set down in malice), allude to the poet's *trade.* One refers, almost by instinct now, to the poet's *business,* the poet's *job,* the poet's *work, task,* and so on. No, Mr. Platt: it is silly to expect, ever, the generation of poets of the revolution. Prophets, yes: a moribund society will spawn them as the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog; but prophets are not artists. Their aim is to excite, not to set something down.

It is silly, I say, to expect to synchronize poets and revolution. Here time is of the essence. The poet, who cannot define the present, who cannot even draw a breath purely in the present, can never divorce his unconscious life from the past, no matter how ardently his conscious activity struggles to be free of its influence. A poet of past revolution is a member of the established order; whereas revolutions in process abolish leisure. That leaves the poet the revolution of the future to set down, if he can manage to see it. If the vision of the prophet is strong enough upon him, if he can maintain his own ecstasy without succumbing to the prophet's aim to excite, he may accomplish a *tour de force.* But even if he does thus succeed in wearing his rue with a difference, he will trail clouds of glory from the unregenerate past. Thus we see that a pure revolutionary art is impossible. Q. E. D.

The generals of the revolution are perfectly aware of these considerations (v. Trotsky "Literature and Revolution"), and it is not their fault if the far-flung sergeants in the province are less subtle. Whether the latter are well advised to comb the literary field in search of recruits is a debatable question. The poets are intelligent and articulate; moreover, in their own way, they are disciplined and brave. *Create* is a word so worn by fools' misuse that there is little sense left in it; let us say that the poets can see, hear, think, feel, talk, write. But these special aptitudes handicap rather than qualify them for service in the line, and they are mainly thought to be useful as auxiliaries, to hearten the troops or harangue the civilian population. If they are enlisted on these terms, the military arm should bear in mind that there is no camp-follower for whom the soldier has a more hearty detestation.

These peculiarities do not make them draft-exempt. Artists are not sacrosanct; too much nonsense has been sung to that score. Moreover, nobody is an artist all the time. It is just to ask them to bear arms or to shovel snow—only it is not remarkably astute. They abrogate their proper functions when you recruit them for the wars: do not delude yourself that they bring cantonments a talent capable of transfer.

New York City. ROLFE HUMPHRIES.

A Postcard to the Social Muse

Madam, since you choose
To call yourself a Muse,
I will not be too nice
To give advice.

Passion is hard of speech,
Wisdom exact of reach;
Poets have studied verse;
And wit is terse.

Change or repose is wrought
By steady arm and thought:
The fine indignant sprawl
Confuses all.

Than to engage with those
Of small verse and less prose
'Twas better far to play
At bouts-rimés.

Stanford University, Calif. YVOR WINTERS.

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Washington Notes

Sympathetic Understanding—Teaming Glass and Young—Deserving Democrats—The Pie Plan—Back to the Spoils System?

BY THE time these words are printed, the President-elect in all probability will be aboard the great sea-going yacht of that forward-looking progressive citizen, Mr. Vincent Astor, consorting with one of his fifth cousins and far removed from the political, professional and journalistic crowds which have surrounded him for so many weeks. They have been strenuous days for Mr. Roosevelt —these days since his election—and when one considers the number and variety of the men to whom he has listened the marvel is that he is still able to beam. But beam and smile he did through it all. Of the hundreds who have poured their views into his attentive ear, there have been few who have not reported that he was "sympathetic" and genial. Not once has he seemed curt, abrupt, nervous irritable or even bored, but always sympathetic, placid, smiling.

Such extraordinary imperturbability seems almost superhuman when one considers the gravity and seriousness of the problems pressing upon the man and the degree to which he has made himself available to one and all. The point has almost been reached, I think, where some of his friends would like to see geniality supplanted by a little grimness. Certainly, they are getting anxious to ascertain definitely on which side of several highly controversial questions he really is. The time has passed when this attitude of "sympathetic understanding" of both sides is still practical—at least such is the opinion of a good many of those affiliated with the various Democratic factions.

Probably before he sails on this really needed rest we shall know whom he has selected for the important posts in the Cabinet, particularly his Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of State. As I write this, however, uncertainty still prevails. It seems to be generally believed that he has asked Senator Carter Glass to be his Secretary of the Treasury, but that Mr. Glass hesitates because of his health and age. It seems further established that, after having seriously considered Mr. Norman H. Davis for Secretary of State, he had swung back to Mr. Owen D. Young before Mr. Young announced that he would not accept an appointment.

If Mr. Glass and Mr. Young had both been in the Cabinet, it would at once have been stamped as a conservative one. It would make no difference whom else he put in his official family. The two really vital posts are those of the Treasury and the State Departments. To fill them with two such complete and generally recognized conservatives as Young and Glass would be an unmistakable indication of the real tendency of the new President. Progressives, Democrats and Republicans who supported him in the last campaign would accept it as evidence of the spurious nature of his liberalism.

Some of these men, particularly the progressives, would be offended at the appointment of either Glass or Young. No amount of explaining and no sops to the progressives in the shape of minor Cabinet appointments would remove the flavor which a Young-Glass combination would have given the Cabinet. Mr. Roosevelt could probably get by with one of them without offending the progressives generally, but hardly with both.

Meanwhile the pressure upon Democratic Senators and Representatives from the great, hungry hordes of job seekers increases as the inauguration date nears. In the memory of the oldest member here there has never been anything like it. Some weeks ago I commented upon what I thought was the lack of wisdom on the part of the astute Mr. Farley in publicly proclaiming that the new administration would have 150,000 places to fill and that they were to be filled with "deserving Democrats."

Recently, I observe, the Honorable Mr. Farley has begun to hedge a little on this declaration. He explained not long ago, in a speech to his party listeners, that they must not expect too much, that it would be impossible to provide jobs for every Democrat who should have one, and that the Civil Service laws protected a number of Republican office holders who cannot be removed. He might have added that they also protect a considerable number of Democrats who have held positions since the days of the late Woodrow Wilson.

In connection with this, a report was recently circulated that the Democratic patronage advisers regarded the proposal to give Mr. Roosevelt power to merge, consolidate and abolish bureaus and departments as an opportunity to circumvent the Civil Service protection now enjoyed by so many of the smaller office holders. This in some larger measure would appease the appetite for pie so voraciously exhibited by the loyal legions of Democrats in every section. The idea is that many positions now held by Civil Service-protected Republicans could be abolished, and later recreated for the benefit of Democratic office seekers who cannot be taken care of in any other way. This plan, it is suggested, is really the reason for the unanimity with which Hoover's recommendation for mergers and consolidations was so promptly ditched by the Democrats. They want to do this job in their own way, with their own man and for their own purposes.

It is a scheme which, of course, would appeal alike to the besieged Democratic National Committeemen, to the hounded Democratic members of House and Senate and to the hungry applicants for office. But that it will appeal to Mr. Roosevelt or in any way receive encouragement or endorsement from him seems to me to be utterly unjustified and unbelievable. It would, of course, be a fraud upon the American people and it is a completely outrageous and discreditable proposal. In just whose fertile mind this "plan" to tear down the Civil Service bars in the interests of the pie hunters originated, I am unable exactly to say, though I have my suspicion. Among the "close friends" of the President-elect are one or two gentlemen fully capable of such political skullduggery and stupid enough to think it clever.

The mere fact that such an idea can be evolved and discussed is an indication of the tremendous demand for positions and the acute embarrassment it is going to cause the patronage dispensers. It is no exaggeration to say that the demand is unprecedentedly great. Two things

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make it so—first, the fact that it is now thirteen years since the Democrats were in power; second, the fact that the depression has made jobs of any sort far scarcer and more desirable than anyone can remember. Under such circumstances, regardless of their confidence in Mr. Roosevelt, it would be wise for the friends of Civil Service to be militant, vigilant and determined. Unless they are, there is an excellent chance that a breach will be made in the breastworks, despite a well meaning President. It might be wise for the true friends of this reform, fought for so long and never really secure, to acquaint Mr. Roosevelt of their apprehensions and see whether they cannot get from him a "sympathetic understanding" about that.

Washington. T. R. B.

Design for Living

Design for Living, by Noel Coward. Ethel Barrymore Theatre, January 24, 1933.

MR. NOEL COWARD'S gift for writing what will act, together with a triangle of acting that flows together with a sort of genuine, mutual affection and rare fluency, makes the occasion of "Design for Living" one that requires the most careful and honest comment. His new play has not only the variety and plentiful outpouring that belongs to Mr. Coward's talent but, at its best moments, an undercurrent of meanings that carries him well forward in playwriting.

The story of "Design for Living" turns on three people, two artists, Otto and Leo, and Gilda, a woman, a painter herself, with an income large enough to pay her own way. She is a definitely intelligent and thinking being, devoted to the two men; she is both straight and tender, absorbed and rebellious, where they enter into her life. In the first act Otto is away in Bordeaux about a portrait, Leo returns from America rich with a theatre success, and spends the night. An old friend, Friedman, a picture dealer, by nature flat, by loyalty held dear, opens the play with a call; there are little lies and Gilda's perplexing devotion to Otto is conveyed to us. Otto returns, he is told of Leo's arrival and accompanies Ernest Friedman to Leo's hotel; and Leo, as the hall door shuts, opens that of the bedroom. Otto returns, is jealous or upset, and finally packs off. In the London second act, eighteen months later, Leo has had a success, is in demand with hostesses, Gilda is getting bored with it. He leaves for a week-end, why not enjoy what you have always been hoping for? Otto, after a New York success with his portraits, returns and stays the night. In the morning Gilda enters dressed for revolt and departure. Ernest Friedman comes to say goodbye, on his way to America, and Gilda shifts and goes with him. Leo comes home ahead of time. He and Otto get drunk together and end on the theme of Gilda the unique and adorable.

In New York two years later Gilda and Ernest Friedman are a success, with picture dealing and decorating. Society friends—and desirable clients—come back with Gilda from the opera. More of the convenient traveling has gone on and Ernest is in Chicago. Otto and Leo appear, after vast traveling about the world; they astonish the stuffed guests, they are sent off by Gilda on the guests' heels, with her latchkey, to save appearances. She steals off by the fire escape. Next morning Ernest Friedman comes home, Gilda is supposed to be still asleep. He is having his coffee when Leo and Otto come down from the bedroom in his pajamas, not fitting too well. In the midst of the argument Gilda comes back from the Ritz, wearing the telephone operator's coat. The play ends with Ernest in a rage of perplexity and disgust. Gilda, not able to go on with her present life, is departing with Otto and Leo, for the three of them cannot live apart. They are on the sofa bursting with laughter and the husband is halfway up the stairs when the curtain falls.

This bald and tiresome account is necessary to any comment on "Design for Living."

Certainly the underlying basis of the first two acts of the play is serious. They say a great deal about love and about relationships, and they are packed, though never heavy, with truth—not stage truth—about the nature and temperament of an artist. They exhibit the great actability of Mr. Coward's dramatic crises and the extraordinary readability of his lines, which almost speak themselves. They proceed with a certain good taste also: the touch lightens where the direct matter might press too insistently; and when that matter is too important to be given that touch, the truth of it is conveyed without any vulgar smudge to it. I mention this point because it speaks well for Mr. Coward and for the English; in our plays such points, either those meant to be honest, strong and forward or those meant to be merely naughty, almost always come off without taste. Sincerity in art is a kind of gift, not a mere bourgeois good intention; and to be common and nasty only orphans the point and widows the mother wit from which the point springs. Mr. Coward is one of the few playwrights who know the implications of what Voltaire meant about the theatre when he wrote to Marquis Albergati of the most divine pastime that cultivated men and virtuous women can enjoy, when more than two of them are gathered together. Some of the lines in "Design for Living" are curiously brazen and choice at the same time and they bring on the full flood of recognition without the resistance that a sense of propriety very properly sets up. I myself—if I may be personal for a second—feel doubly fitted to appreciate this; since before I was seven I had heard from our colored cook in the South most of the bold slogans of our bold Broadway drama, though I did not hear them scaled and polished to the needs of civilized sophistication.

Mr. Coward's limitations appear in the opening passages of "Design for Living." When the crucial moment arrives, the full dramatic struggle among the three characters, a scene with tense and genuinely significant motivations and comment on life, we realize the shortcomings of the writing as we have had it up to then. What it lacks is texture, a kind of echo. It is written with facility, ease, a sure theatre sense in the dramatist. But it lacks resonance, it does not convey that impression of immanence and content, of a pulse of life deeper than the words spoken, and of a stratum of life deep and pressing, implicit with what may happen and, I feel sure, with what the author means. During all this part of the first act, up to Otto's entrance, it was only through the shock and beauty of Miss Lynn Fontanne's acting of the woman, from whom the future in the

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play is born as a child is born from its mother's body, that we were, in any profound dramatic sense, prepared for what was to follow. It is easy in drama or in any art to think that things are said when they are only babbled easily off, though meanwhile they are things the playwright should approach on his knees, as it were, seeking the invention by which they are truly born in theatre and not in a chatter of words.

To make that point is to take Mr. Coward seriously. An intense and significant scene does not begin with its own beginning. No matter what the characters in life might actually say or do, the reality of the whole business lies in the dramatist's mind; and in his depiction of the events that lead up to it this intense reality belongs to the whole and not to the mere moment itself. The weight of his realization bears on all, not on a sudden crisis or situation; he savors the whole broth; and he brings subtly to bear, on all the play, shadows and voices that are not always at every moment perceptible in the room.

Mr. Noel Coward, if you know him, has the most singular degree of generous sweetness, abundance of theatre invention, give and take, and a rare power of happy delight in success, a thing quite different from apprehensive greed, closeness and dirty stage envy. It may be that this cuts him off from a certain shadow through which when he is serious he should sometimes pass. But I think not necessarily so. It is only that I could see very well, watching "Design for Living," how close were some of the implications of this new play to his desire, and I was reminded how inevitably in each work of art the matter must be stained with its own essence and not be spotted with instances that remain unabsorbed.

As to the comedy in these two acts of "Design for Living," it seemed to me a bubbling up of spirits and also a real part of the artistic temperament, to which it is wholly natural that in the midst of one's own drama the drama of some incident, some point, even some figure of speech, arises with such a delight that it joins one's living pulse. All that flying off the moment, those epigrams and grinning monkeyisms and caustic flings, are easily a part, for these three people in "Design for Living," of the human comedy, whose jolly infection proves too much for their vanity, intensity, close shaves or private parochialisms. Great artists have varied in these matters, some of them elastic, as Mozart could be time and again, some set and taut as was Michelangelo, of whom Raphael said that he walked the streets of Rome like an executioner. But Mr. Coward was not writing of great artists; and it seemed to me that all through these two acts of "Design for Living" his painter and playwright were very pertinent and very truly conveyed. This introduction of the comedy flippancy and poignancy that Mr. Coward advances is entirely in line with Molière when he inquires, through Dorante, *"si une pièce de théâtre qui a attrapé son but n'a pas suivi un bon chemin,"* and if we may not safely yield ourselves heartily to things that grip us *"par les entrailles"* and not look for reasons to mar our pleasure. It is in line, too, with Nietzsche's words about good things running on happy feet.

Miss Lynn Fontanne gave what seemed to me a very right and beautiful interpretation throughout the play: perfect conveyance of her Gilda's brains, tenderness, passion and independence, not to say the reckless finality and innate solitude of the character. Such understanding, so completely converted into acting terms, is rare in any theatre. Mr. Coward's playing in the comedy passages was all lightly true and right, so passing and so accurate it was, and in such simple security the good taste of it, the self-enjoyment and the verve. In his more serious, passionate moments his method of nervous staccato and directly personal quality makes a harder test on the lines spoken and tends to expose any lack of power in the writing. His tendency is to thin down where Mr. Lunt and Miss Fontanne enrich with technical variations. As theatre, the places where Otto was matched against Leo were studies in skill; both actors were right enough, but in the tone, pitch and timing, the playing under, with and over Mr. Coward's effects, Mr. Lunt did a brilliant *tour de force* beyond anything he has done in some time. He also contrived to be convincing as an artist, a painter, where we have as a rule only nonsense and stage-manager hokum. The rapport among the three served to elevate the whole moment into that pure acting, as distinguished from sheer stage business or being oneself, that our stage rarely sees. Acting is always, or it is nothing, a chamber in the house of dreams. What with the vagaries of the third act, both Mr. Lunt and Mr. Coward got lost, not to speak of seeming to follow one another like a comic team, all at the expense of the play's warm undercurrents of meaning. The laughter thus aroused is not worth the misapprehension it leads to and the encouragement of the audience to take the play as fantastic farce, which it is not; there is too much substance, however elusive, for fantasy.

The third act of "Design for Living" seems to me largely trash. Gilda has gone to inspect the apartment with a guest, a not unlikely client as well, and the wooden little buttered married couple remain, that curious type we have developed in America that is stupid without being dull, coarse without being passionate, solid without being free, cold without having ever been hot, possessive by imitation, bored without direction or desire, flat without being level, progressive through having never started and modern for lack of a past. Leo and Otto come in. Seeing the couple they do a number from what is apparently a habitual vaudeville. One has a sense of wild spirits, but not of the spirits in art that the other two acts have shown us. The interlude with the numb society pair is too long; one wonders what Gilda and the other guest can be doing all this time; they could see Schönbrunn by now. Technically, also, the play suffers from the fact that the second act ends with Otto and Leo at a drunken apogee and we are obliged to ask ourselves if they have done much otherwise these two years of wistful, roistering travel. They make a sort of Bohême team, *vie de Bohême,* yes—or at least so à la Murger—though in the other two acts we took them as artists really, not great, but veritable. Gilda's life has been flat and they are enlivening. But considering Gilda's brains, this is not enough; her life has been, also, hungry and vacant; we see nothing in these two men that will feed that lack, not as they now present themselves. Mr. Coward's idea I can divine; I will not say that it is created on the stage there before us. No; Mr. Coward, though he may think he has said his theme, needs to do the third act over if he wants to get it said.

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After those vibrant first and second acts, this third act, no —"until then there yet lived some little fragment of the old melodies, saved in thy soul and hands." Nossis, eight centuries before Leontius wrote that, made a verse:

ἀλλὰ φλυάκων
ἐκ τραγικῶν ἴδιον κισσὸν ἐδρεψάμεθα,

It might have been the theme of the play that Mr. Coward, in his best moments, was writing—

> But from our tragical mirth we plucked an ivy of our own.

STARK YOUNG.

Glinka at Last

THE CHIEF, most captivating, most lengthily overdue première of the current musical season in New York took place some weeks ago at the Pythian Temple Auditorium, the evening the Russian Artists' Mutual Aid Society gave a concert performance of twelve excerpts from Glinka's fairy opera "Ruslan and Lyudmila" there. The event very tardily introduced a great musician to the city. While Glinka had been known to our musical public as the author of some overtures occasionally played by the orchestras, his chief work had never previously, either in a concert or an operatic version, been given here: and not to know a composer's best music is scarcely to be in a position to comprehend his genius.

For all its inequalities, the ninety-year-old score introduced by the selections given at the Pythian Temple, most of them arias, but inclusive of the overture, the oriental dances and the finales of the first and last acts, is indeed a masterpiece, the worthy forerunner of "Boris Godounov," "Prince Igor," "Le Coq d'Or" and the other great operas of the nationalistic school of Russian composers. Less individually colored a work, perhaps, than its chief successors, "Ruslan and Lyudmila" none the less delights by reason of its freshness, spontaneity and exuberance, the richness and appropriateness with which its simple and characteristic melodies are harmonized, the freedom and expressivity of its recitatives, the chastity and perfect point of its orchestration. It is a juicy old piece, generously full of real music amid its *valses brilliantes*. As Calvocoressi correctly says, "It speaks in a powerful and new idiom—it is a work born not of a fashion but of creative necessity." To feel its naïve and healthy vigor is once again to fall in love with the warm thing we used to call "the Russian genius."

Nationalistic, of course in the extreme sense of the music of the folkloreistic Russian "Five"—Balakirev, Cui, Moussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov—"Ruslan and Lyudmila" can scarcely be said to be. True, it extraordinarily foreshadows many of the innovations which give the music of the nationalistic Russian school its peculiar character and color. It strives for the archaic tone of the old chivalric Russia, the tone so magnificently realized by Borodin in his second symphony and in "Prince Igor." It embodies slavonic and oriental folksongs; and the folksong became a sort of touchstone for Moussorgsky and the rest. Our famous friend, the Greek liturgical whole-tone scale, which triumphed in Moussorgsky and was grafted from him by Debussy on to post-Wagnerian music, makes what is probably its first appearance in European instrumental music in the pages of "Ruslan." Passages such as the dreamy introduction to Ratmir's aria, are wellnigh Rimsky-like in their orientalism; and movements from the oriental dances might very appropriately figure among the members of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker" suite. Musicologists have found many of the characteristically Russian harmonies, built on fourths and fifths, in the score; and even a polyrhythm or two. It is a fact that the "Five" found the justification for all their sundry esthetics in "Ruslan."

Nevertheless, the folkloreism and orientalism, and the harmonies developed from the liturgical and popular Russian music, are ultimately incidental and episodic in Glinka; a superficial color rather more than a basic one. "Ruslan" is really a work of transition; a bridge between classical European and nationalistic Russian music. Glinka was a pioneer; and classical elements persist very largely in his work. Like an Italian opera, "Ruslan" is composed of separate finished numbers. While perfectly characteristic of the *dramatis personae*, the arias rather regularly follow the traditional pattern of those of French and Italian opera: introductory recitative, slow movement, final fast movement. Lyudmila's first song, for instance, is definitely coloratura writing of the sort at which the Italian operatic composers of the period aimed. Weber to an extent also dominated Glinka: one cannot help feeling the kinship between Ruslan's heroic and long-lined aria and that of Adolar in "Euryanthe," and between the eery music of Ruslan's scene with the head and the forest-gorge music in "Der Freischütz." It has frequently been suggested that both the romantic faery and the orientalism of the Russian score are developments of elements figuring in "Oberon."

After all, Glinka's career antedated by several decades the Russian nationalism and the pan-Slavism of the eighteen-seventies. And it was under the influence of these religions that the Five took the extreme "swing to the east" adumbrated by Glinka; and Moussorgsky deliberately set out to found an esthetic on the expressions of the Great-Russian *moujik;* and Rimsky to emulate Ukrainian and Caucasian peasant art.

Actually, "Ruslan and Lyudmila" parallels such representative works of the later, classicizing, westernizing Stravinsky as "Oedipus Rex" and the "Symphony of the Psalms"; but in the inverse sense. For Glinka's work marks the movement from classicism toward Russian nationalism, while Stravinsky's marks the movement from nationalism back toward what we still hope may prove to be a new catholic music, a new music of the all-folk.

It is sincerely to be wished that the performance at the Pythian Temple may find speedy and frequent repetitions, for "Ruslan" would constitute a delightful and profitable addition to the standard concert repertory, particularly if to the arias, duets, finales and orchestral numbers there would be added some of the highly vigorous choruses of the opera. Nor would there be any occasion to regret the popularization of the work in concert form, since the music might be divorced from the drama without causing loss to anyone or anything. Not only is "Ruslan" more spectacular than dramatic, like Rimsky's "Sadko," but it is based on a libretto which from all accounts appears to be a very model of incoherency. It was furnished Glinka by four of

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his literary friends who simultaneously and, it is said, perfectly independently of each other, set to work to dramatize the fruit of Pushkin's youthful enthusiasm for Ariosto. Not only was their product, quite naturally, idiotic; it was also long.

And it is to be wished that the repetitions of "Ruslan" might be made by the Russian Artists' Mutual Aid Society. The performance given at the Pythian Temple by these artists, headed by Nina Koshetz, Max Panteliev, Michael Shwetz and Eugene Plotnikov, was informed by a delightful artistic spirit not so very common in this hurried city.

PAUL ROSENFELD.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Dangers of Deflation

SIR: In the columns of The New Republic of November 30, you stated that the path out of the present depression lay either in inflation or deflation, that is, that either prices which have fallen must be raised to the level of contractual prices or the contractual prices must be pushed down to the level of fluid prices if we are to recover from the present depression. You mentioned that inflationary attempts have failed and hence there remains the alternative of marking down the claims of creditors to the level of present prices. It is this latter notion which I wish to criticize.

Theoretically, one price level is as good as another. It is only a change among prices which causes prosperity and depression. Therefore you appear to have reason on your side when you advocate bringing all prices (especially prices contracted at the relatively high price level previous to 1929) into line with the present low wholesale prices. Aside, however, from the great practical difficulties, there are theoretical difficulties of sufficient seriousness to render questionable the wisdom of The New Republic or any other body of responsible opinion advocating such a policy. What assurance, for example, is there that the influences radiating from a marking down of the claims of creditors will not result in a greater decline of the fluid prices? In other words, after we have, say, reduced all debts 50 percent, why might we not find the fluid prices to have declined also another 50 percent? If such were the case, our policy of lowering the claims of the creditors would have brought the economic system further to its knees without any corresponding advantages.

There are many reasons to believe that the fluid prices would, in the present state of the world, continually outrun a program of deliberate readjustment downward of contractual prices. Suppose, instead of aiding the railroads, we force them to liquidate, putting them in the hands of the receivers. Suppose, further, that the bondholders receive fifty cents on a dollar. What effect will such a policy have on the economic system? Railway securities are held largely by universities, banks and insurance companies. Since universities, for example, usually spend almost all of their income from such securities, a curtailment of income from their bonds would necessitate a proportionate curtailment of their expenditures. This involves laying off instructors, janitors, etc. These persons, no longer having any incomes, will reduce their expenditures on food, clothing, etc. Consequently the prices of these goods will fall and producers of these goods will suffer greater losses, and hence, they too contract. Extend the reduction of contractual payments throughout the economic system and the reaction of the university will generally be repeated. With a decreasing amount of purchasing power being used to buy goods, prices will fall. Consequently the policy would merely have made matters worse.

Furthermore, this policy has the disadvantage of necessitating the liquidation of banks and insurance companies. For if the security obligations of corporations were appreciably reduced, the assets of banks and insurance companies would diminish correspondingly, resulting in their liquidation on a large scale. This, I suggest, is one of the most severe hindrances possible to the recovery of industry. Bank failures spread disaster throughout the entire economic world. It should not be forgotten that if you cut a bank's assets, its liabilities must be cut too. Freezing deposits, which this would involve, destroys the mechanism of payment and thereby causes a further decline of the price level.

The logical outcome of the policy of overhauling contractual prices involves overhauling all our financial institutions, since they consist of contractual prices. They may need overhauling, it is true, but knocking them down to begin with is surely not a good way of going about it.

You also mentioned that inflation has failed. What has actually happened is that some attempts at inflation have failed. There are still effective ways of bringing up the price level.

Cambridge, Mass. EARL ROLPH.

The Future of the C.P.L.A.

SIR: Louis Stanley's recent review of the Brookwood Labor Pamphlets, of which we are author and editor, speaks of "the Brookwood-C.P.L.A. philosophy" and of the identification of Brookwood "through personnel" with the C.P.L.A. He implies in other ways also that Brookwood Labor College, as represented by the pamphlets, shares the viewpoint of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action and "has no faith in either the Socialist or Communist parties." As a matter of fact, the pamphlet "Our Labor Movement Today" lists and discusses the Socialist party as one of the progressive groups (pp. 76 ff.); and the author was and is an active member of the Socialist party. We fail to see how the reviewer could have derived this erroneous conclusion from the pamphlets.

The Conference for Progressive Labor Action, as is there explained, was originally planned to increase coöperation among progressives of all shades in working for a mass labor party, etc. in the fall of 1931, however, "the C.P.L.A. leaders declared," to quote "Our Labor Movement Today" (p. 89), "that they had no faith in the possibility of making over the Socialist party"; and they wished the C.P.L.A. to become "a militant left-wing political organization" with "an active, disciplined membership." This set it up as a rival and competing organization for the membership of existing political groups which would necessarily make it more difficult to fulfill the original aim of coördinating all progressive and radical elements in the building of an effective labor movement.

The pamphlet purposely refers to the new tendency in the C.P.L.A. as the beliefs of the leaders, not as the policy of the organization and certainly not as that of Brookwood. Far from agreeing with this new tendency, as the reviewer implies, we and almost all the other members of the Brookwood faculty opposed it from the outset. Having reluctantly abandoned all hope of influencing the C.P.L.A. leaders in the matter, John C. Kennedy, director of Studies of Brookwood, and the author and editor have recently resigned from the C.P.L.A.

Brookwood has throughout continued its established policy of serving all progressive and radical elements in the labor movement which genuinely wish to coöperate with it. This policy was unanimously reaffirmed last June by the Brookwood Corporation, including the labor representatives, the faculty and the graduates, in a statement which declared in part:

> Now more than ever in its history labor needs united coöperative activity. . . . Brookwood refuses to be diverted from its established educational program and become subordinated to any particular theoretical or political faction.

KATHERINE H. POLLAK,
New York City. DAVID J. SAPOSS.

SIR: That Brookwood has not been organizationally subordinated to any political or theoretical group, has not sought to force any allegiance upon its students and places its services at the disposal of any workers who will use them, is correct.

People do not function in the labor movement or elsewhere, however, unless they have, to use a term of Mr. Stanley's, a "philosophy." The "philosophy" of most of the Brookwood faculty has been that of the C.P.L.A. Mr. Saposs spent many hours last summer, long after the so-called "new tendency" in the C.P.L.A. had set in, in helping to draft the report of the National Executive

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Committee to the Labor Day Convention of the C.P.L.A., and at that convention was chairman of the Committee on Policy and Constitution which brought in and moved the adoption of the N.E.C. report. That report makes definite criticisms of other parties and groups:

> In the face of unparalleled opportunity and challenge the various political and theoretical organizations and groups have—failed. . . . None of them, at least as now led and constituted, is an effective and satisfactory vanguard for American labor.

The report goes on to say that the C.P.L.A must be this left-wing vanguard organization of American labor, necessarily having its own "political" or theoretical position and aims. The C.P.L.A. was not, however, to electioneer for votes in rivalry with existing parties but to work to bring all parties and labor organizations into coöperation to form a mass labor party, within which the members of the C.P.L.A. should function as left-wingers. This policy has been scrupulously carried out since the Convention. If anyone no longer agrees with it, that is, of course, his right.

When Mr. Stanley talks about the C.P.L.A. having "no faith in the Socialist or Communist parties," he uses broad terms. The C.P.L.A. recognizes healthy elements in these parties and others, has followed a consistent and successful united-front policy in many situations, works for a united mass labor party. It does not regard either the Socialist or the Communist party, as now constituted, as an effective left-wing vanguard for American labor. It is prepared to defend that position on occasion, but it prefers to go about its business of organizing Edison workers, building unemployed leagues, battling against racketeering in the unions.

As for the Socialist party, there for some reason seems to be the real sore point. I do not blush to confess that the war and post-war history of the Social Democracy has made me one of those who do not believe that the party is or is likely to become an effective revolutionary vanguard. Anyone nevertheless disposed to proclaim his or her allegiance to the Socialist party or to regard criticism of it as a major offense against the workers is entitled to his convictions. It seems to me reasonable in that case to have the same concern about criticism of left-wing groups or parties, a concern which is not so apparent in the above reply.

May I emphasize that I am writing as an individual and not, just now, officially either for Brookwood or the C.P.L.A.

Katonah, N. Y. A. J. MUSTE.

The Cost of Electricity

SIR: In your editorial comment, February 1 issue, on the Institute of Public Engineering, held January 20 to discuss the cost of electrical distribution, there is one misstatement which you will no doubt be glad to correct. Major Pike demonstrated that the New York statewide average cost of overhead distribution, *i. e.*, all expenses incurred between the distribution substation to and including the customer's meter, was 2.36 cents per kilowatt hour in 1930 for an average residence consumer using 550 kilowatt hours, or 2.23 cents per kilowatt hour for the 600-kilowatt-hour average in 1932. Manager Buchanan of the London, Ontario, plant stated that the comparable figure for his city, where consumption per residence consumer averages 1,860 kilowatt hours annually, is about one-half cent.

The figures quoted in your editorial, 2.8 cents per kilowatt hour for Seattle and 1.32 cents per kilowatt hour for London (Ontario), both publicly owned plants, are the average rates paid in those cities by domestic consumers and cover the whole cost of the service, including generation and transmission as well as distribution. The N.E.L.A. represents the American average domestic rate as just below six cents. The median rate, of course, will be considerably higher.

The cost of transmitted current is well understood. It ranges within such narrow limits as to be a fairly stable element in retail rates. Hence the importance of the aroused interest in distribution costs and our growing ability to measure them for any given community. Accurate distribution costs, added to the known cost of transmitted current, mean a radically revised level for retail rates.

Philadelphia, Pa. MORRIS LLEWELLYN COOKE.

The Film Forum

SIR: In answer to the need for an organization that will present unusual, experimental and important films, The Film Forum has been established in New York and will spread to other cities in the next few months.

The Film Forum will depart from the "good box office" standard of the commercial movie house and the "arty" standard of the Little Theatre. It will show its membership pictures of keen social and cinematographic importance—foreign and domestic films neglected because they differ with the social, political and moral status quo; films that represent an artistic advance in movie making; newsreels that reflect social events such as are customarily suppressed by commercial newsreel organizations. . . .

The New York meetings will be held at the New School for Social Research on Sunday afternoons and evenings and will be open only to members and their guests. New Republic readers in other cities who are interested in seeing the plan extended should communicate with the Film Forum at 125 West Forty-fifth Street, New York City.

SIDNEY HOWARD, President.

New York City.

The Unemployed College Graduate

SIR: We university graduates, after working our way through college—and paying heavily for the privilege of that labor—find that a depression (for which no one can blame us in the slightest) has left us unemployed, miserably paid for highly skilled work, or in many cases even starving. Society needs doctors, lawyers, nurses, scientists, journalists, research workers and social workers; yet we young people who have acquired the skill haven't even the right to practise that professional achievement—in many cases haven't even the right to exist. The richest country in the world grants us the alternative of meanly paid jobs. . . .

Because educated people who are unemployed suffer equally with others and because our position is similar to that of other unemployed groups, we are organizing ourselves into the Alumni Section of the National Student League. Actuated by a sincere belief that society should aid us until we can find positions, we demand unemployment insurance for jobless graduates, employment agencies intended for and operated by students and free courses in graduate schools to help us retain our professional skill that we may be of some value when society needs us again. . . .

Within each professional group we are also initiating studies of conditions of that group. With this information we hope better to understand the specific as well as the general reasons for our unemployment. We invite every graduate of schools of law, medicine, nursing, social science, natural science and the humanities to join us in this work. Write to Alumni Section, National Student League, 13 West Seventeenth Street, New York City.

YETTA LISS, Secretary,
MADELINE JAFFE, Research Director,
New York City. SIDNEY KATZ, Chairman.

The Struggle against War

SIR: The danger that the present undeclared war in the Far East will develop into a new world war is growing greater. The opposition of American workers and intellectuals to imperialist wars, both of their own country and Japan, will, we hope, exert pressure on Far Eastern opinion. For this reason, the American Committee for Struggle Against War is calling for anti-war demonstrations all over the United States.

Such a demonstration is arranged in New York for Saturday, February 4, at 12 noon. The line of march will be Wall Street to Broad Street past the Japanese Consulate. The parade will wind up at Broad and South Streets with a huge mass meeting. We hope that New York readers of The New Republic will participate in this march. Readers in other sections of the country who are willing to take part in the struggle against war are urged to write this committee (104 Fifth Avenue, Room 1811).

OAKLEY JOHNSON,
The American Committee for Struggle Against War.
New York City.

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Citizen Zola

Zola, by Henri Barbusse. Translated by M. B. and F. C. Green. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 279 pages. $3.

HENRI BARBUSSE tells us that he thought for a moment of calling his book on Zola, "From Man of Letters to Man." This may not sound so well in French as in English; but certainly it conveys the whole intention of the work as well as the inward drama of Zola's life. One must stress the inwardness of this work; for it is the "pilgrimage" of Zola, from the study table at which he passed all his life to a revolutionary leadership and a kind of martyrdom, which chiefly absorbs M. Barbusse. Zola, who was as widely hated or misunderstood as he was widely read in his own country, is still a bitterly controversial theme; and M. Barbusse uses him as the medium for powerful special pleading. The last ten chapters of his book are given over almost entirely to picturing the metamorphosis of the detached novelist into the public champion of human rights and especially of the right to revolution. They are written with a seriousness and passion that is not common nowadays among the French authors who are translated for us, mostly lovers of sport or travel or clerical authority.

Originally, as M. Barbusse's argument runs, the literature of the naturalists in the 1870's had no more to do with the social question than that of any other literary school. Zola took no sides; he only *analyzed;* he used the "new science" but to write of the real world about him in new tones and a new vocabulary. Accused of slandering the Parisian workers in "L' Assommoir," with its scenes of depravity, Zola denied any such intention. Others, on the ground of the same book, charged him with being socialistic; Zola denied this too. Men like Aubrey Beardsley and Mallarmé admired him at first as the "dark poet" of nineteenth-century Europe. Zola himself—and here M. Barbusse might have given stronger clues to his romantic spirit—freely admitted his own lyrical temperament in private correspondence.

"I exaggerate certainly . . ." he would say. "We all lie more or less; but what is the mechanism and the mentality of our lying?" His "lying" as he felt was colored more accurately by the new theories of biology, medicine and sex. But later, during the literary polemics which raged in the 1880's, he went so far as to say that not only literature but society itself must become naturalistic or perish—that is, become more scientific rather than medieval, clerical and military. His own direction was equally predetermined. The day would come when he would cease dissecting the great middle-class republic and turn prophetic, Utopian.

When, progressing further, after 1890, toward synthesis rather than mere analysis, and toward socialism, Zola saw that attacks upon him redoubled in violence, he felt that "everything hung together." Certain historians have pointed out that irrepressible conflict was preparing itself within the young republic: the movement of the military adventurer, General Boulanger, the cry for separation of Church and State, the pressure of political socialism among the masses—all these forces would produce their crisis, which would be called the Dreyfus Case. And when this exploded, Zola must place himself once more "at the head of the movement of progress." The blunt honesty of the man was unlike that of other men of letters. He could not be silent. Besides, there is a "complicity in silence," as Barbusse terms it. Zola's later enormously lengthy (socialistic) novels were rather historical and political tracts than pieces of imaginative literature: such were, "The Debacle"; the city novels, "Rome," "Lourdes," "Paris"; and "Fecundity," "Labor." But "J'Accuse!" the pamphlet of ten pages in which he directly challenged the French government and army, was undoubtedly the strongest and most imaginative of all his literary productions.

M. Barbusse concludes:

> And we? Zola's life offers a clear challenge in these days when we are witnessing the decadence of a society, the agony of an international empire. . . . Reality is social. Here again we have . . . war, the crises of liquidation so long foreseen. What other drama can captivate us than this total drama which is also a personal drama, us, the "intellectual workers," who are at once the actors in, and the photographers of the era, whose trade it is to talk out loud. Henceforth what can, in our eyes, subsist of the theories of the divine right of the poet, the dictatorship of beauty, or else of art as a means of aristocratic or gross distraction, a way of escape or flight.

There has been a great deal of discussion lately, much of it confusing, as to whether writers should take part in the total social drama. I believe with M. Barbusse that they should take part; in fact that they cannot help participating, either by their activity or their silence. But how participate? Zola's example, we should bear in mind, is of two distinct ways of approach: as "man of letters" and as "man."

In a novel the mere quantity of class-consciousness is not enough. It is the amount of dramatic power engendered by the novel and the degree in which it fulfills esthetic requirements that determine its interest and success as a novel. In his early works, as "man of letters," Zola had the effect of demolishing bourgeois morality with a minimum of propaganda. His later novels, as I have written elsewhere, far more doctrinaire, were exceedingly weak by comparison. But in "J'Accuse!" a work of political literature, which he wrote as a "man," he was immensely successful; he fulfilled the traditional demands of this form of literature for eloquence, logic, energy, clarity.

I mean that the artist, as artist, may make a poem or a building whose ruling conception is one of order, harmony, decency. Then, as a "man," he may go out of his house to fight those who he believes are pledged to disorder, discord, indecency. In either case there are distinct standards of excellence which will be the measure of his effectiveness. On the one hand he must, besides having the right ideas, be a good artist; on the other, if he is going to turn fighter or, for instance, pamphleteer, he must acquire the qualities of great propagandists of the past, Swift, Voltaire, Rousseau, Edmund Burke and—Zola.

M. Barbusse, who is himself a notable disciple of Zola's, has some valuable hints or prophecies for the future novel. He believes that it is to be collective in its scope rather than limited to the individual destinies of puppets, to plots in which "the boy gets the girl" in the last scene. "The personal intervention of the central hero, once reduced to a minimum, will tend henceforth to play no other role than that of the eye which is drawn to regulate, centralize and group. . . ." This is roughly the method now used by John Dos Passos. But Zola, who must be distinguished especially from Flaubert and Maupassant by his penchant for extended descriptions, his superb treatment of crowd scenes, of groups, of types, rather than of characters, has taught us more about the collective novel than anyone else.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

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Some Recent Novels

God's Little Acre, by Erskine Caldwell. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.

Hot Places, by Alan Pryce-Jones. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Pageant, by G. B. Lancaster. New York: The Century Company. $2.50.

The Body's Rapture, by Jules Romains. Translated by John Rodker. New York: Liveright, Inc. $7.50.

ERSKINE CALDWELL'S "God's Little Acre" is important, aside from its value as a novel, for what it reveals of Caldwell's development. In many respects it is superior to "Tobacco Road," which it resembles: technically, Caldwell's skill has increased; the characters are more varied types; the scene is broadened and enlarged. The story revolves around the family of Ty Ty Walden, a Georgia dirt farmer who has been digging for gold for fifteen years, a character not unlike Jeeter Lester of "Tobacco Road," but with a broader vision than that oddity of American fiction. As in all of Caldwell's writing, the characters have a sort of childlike intensity and determination in the doing of absurd things: Ty Ty and his sons, gravely scientific in their search for gold, kidnap an albino to divine the lode for them, roping him in and driving his wife to hide in the swamps in complete innocence of the effects of their act. Ty Ty himself, with his long monologues on sex and religion, his candid admiration of his daughter's "rising beauties," is almost a classic type of clown—there is, in fact, more humor in this book than in any other recent novel I have read.

There is an accompanying theme in the attempt of Will Thompson, Ty Ty's son-in-law, to turn on the power in a mill that has been closed down. The attempt ends tragically, as Will is killed by company guards, but the tragedy seems unreal and slightly grotesque, out of key with the rest of the book, as if Caldwell wanted to bring a specific social criticism into his work, and had not found an entirely successful way of doing so. He is a satirist; his characters are all distorted and enlarged, closer in spirit to Don Quixote and Alice than to the farmers and mill hands of Georgia and Carolina; he seems to be impelled by a desire to let his satire go to the limits of his imagination, and to be restrained by the current actualities of the setting of his stories. Yet "God's Little Acre" is among the most powerful of recent novels.

"Hot Places" is an importation, its author being an Englishman of twenty-five, associate editor of The London Mercury and author of a book of travel. The three stories in this volume are laid in South America, apparently in order to give Mr. Pryce-Jones a chance to describe the landscape, which he does with great care. "Chile" presents the wearing routine of a marathon dance going on endlessly in a dead desert town, with a complication provided by the winner, who does not know that her child has died. "Brazil" dramatizes some tense summer emotions, a succession of weary quarrels like the quarrels of nervous exhaustion. "Ecuador," the most ambitious story in the volume, tells of the dying Marquesa, Carolina de Uneda, stranded in her lonely castle, remembering the unreal happenings of the past—political, social, servants' intrigues, a love affair with a valet—the complications of a lavender novel told in a manner that reminds one of Joseph Conrad. Mr. Pryce-Jones writes a careful and cadenced prose, and has an excellent eye for the rather grotesque items of the landscape; the dance hall, for example, in "Chile," with the dancers shuffling about senselessly in the hot, deserted morning, is the sort of scene that stimulates his imagination. But he seems ill at ease in the company of his characters, almost bashful with them, and continually turns away from their odd troubles to write with relief about the mountains, the sunsets, the railroads, the little towns.

"Pageant" is another novel that gets its effect by being laid in a far place. It is about the early settling and colonization of Tasmania, beginning in the days when Van Diemens Land was a penal colony, and when the prisoners from England were farmed out to the settlers or made to work the roads. The story opens in 1846, and carries on through three generations of the Comyn family, with a good deal of historical information about Australia dropped during the course of the story. The historical information, with the rather full descriptions of the way of life of the pioneers, is far more interesting than the personal adventures of the Comyns, for in its emotional complications "Pageant" falls into the groove made by hundreds of family chronicles before it. There is the familiar conflict of parental intention versus young desire, with no marked variation in detail. There is also one of those wise and acid grandmothers who combine worldly wisdom with a gift for apt phrasing, and who seem to be more numerous in family chronicles than anywhere else.

Miss Lancaster attaches an unnatural importance to such distinctions as being the toast of the town, and seems continually delighted that Madame, the grandmother, has preserved her European mannerisms at the frontier, in the same way that she seems unduly enthusiastic about the men carving civilization from the wilderness. And she seems to relish it too much when Madame floors some farmer by talking like a character out of Jane Austen. But the accompanying details, the political struggles with the colonial government, the threatened uprisings of the prisoners, the raids of the bush-rangers on the homes of the wealthy, the attempts at insurrection—these seem authentic, and are more real rewards for the reader than Miss Lancaster seems to suspect.

"The Body's Rapture" comes boxed and wrapped in cellophane, limited to 750 copies, and beautifully printed and bound. It is made up of three books—"Lucienne," "The Lord God of Flesh" and "When the Ship." All revolve around the same characters and illustrate the same theme—the love of Lucienne, teaching piano in a small provincial town, and Pierre Febvre, purser of a transatlantic liner.

The first book is Lucienne's, and is by far the best of the three, presenting Lucienne herself, the Barbelenet household in which she teaches the two warring daughters, Pierre, and the first faint suggestions of the love which is later to dominate the book. There is a patient analytical charm to this first long section that very frequently suggests Proust, a Proust with the malice unemphasized, but with the same sense of mystery evoked from very simple happenings. In "The Lord God of Flesh" Pierre takes up the story, to tell of the honeymoon and the development of the lovers, the way in which their absorption in desire gives them, so to speak, extra-human powers of insight and awareness. The third book is almost incoherent; it is principally concerned with Pierre's voyage after the honeymoon, with mysterious interludes of companionship in separation as Lucienne's spirit, by the intensity of her desire, traverses the waters to join her husband. It is also deadened with long discussions in which Pierre expounds his theories of the religion of sex. The meaning is clear, and Lucienne's eventual appearance on the ship

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indicates that the religion of sex gives, to those who truly worship, the power to conquer time and space.

This is a vulgarization of a message which is presented with great tact, for M. Romains seems to say obliquely what Lawrence said candidly. The difference between Romains' theme and that of Lawrence is very great, however; Lucienne and Pierre are gravely, almost self-consciously passionate, going about their amours with a seriousness which might have disturbed Lord Chatterley's gamekeeper. Moreover, there is in the relationship of Pierre and Lucienne a kind of of high-minded "impurity" to which Lawrence frequently objected, a suggestion that they relish each other, not for earthly pleasures, but because of the unearthly powers given them by love. Woven into the texture of the story are insights into human motives, many of them having nothing to do with love. In fact, "The Body's Rapture" is at its best when the religion of sex is temporarily disregarded.

ROBERT CANTWELL.

An Uncommon Sensibility

The Second Common Reader, by Virginia Woolf. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 302 pages. $3.

IN PLAN and execution "The Second Common Reader" is exactly like the first. There are a few centenary articles; and the members of the Academy of Dead Immortals must indeed pray that Mrs. Woolf be assigned this formal task of reassurance. She at once discovers and respects their sense of perspective and, with her intimate sense of what creation involves, she is warm in her understanding of the trouble and joy of the process, keen and kind in commenting on the result. These tributes of understanding are given to John Donne and Christina Rossetti (the actual centenary articles) and to others (for what's in a date?) among them Sidney, Defoe, Sterne, DeQuincey, Hazlitt and Hardy. But again, as in the previous book, Mrs. Woolf is no snob. She is generous to little people: to Parson James Woodforde who recited the facts and the bill of fare for the day to that inseparable bachelor friend, his diary; to Parson John Skinner who, unable to find complete refuge from Camerton in Camalodonum, shot himself dead; to Jack Mytton, the primeval man born in the reign of George the Fourth; to Geraldine Jewsbury who made herself ridiculous loving Jane Carlyle but memorable in one fine bit of advice to her; to all the poor unfortunates at Dr. Burney's party where it was forgotten that Dr. Johnson never began a topic but had to be challenged with one.

To pay tribute to the great and resurrect the little in short essays requires all Mrs. Woolf's powers as an artist in her own right. She has to know how to imply a sound comment on a book in an account of her impressions; how to dissolve a workable hypothesis about a person into the scenes and attitudes in which it is most enjoyable to see him again. Mrs. Woolf does these things quite as excellently in the second volume as in the first; she again proves herself an inspiring reader of the books that we read too, and a marvelous reader by proxy of the books we don't read.

Yet, saying this much, one has not indicated the distinction of this book. Such collections of short appreciative essays on the "spirit" of various persons and books are frequent and standardized enough to constitute an art form. As a rule they are collections of lyric cries by respectable, sterile people, pathetically if not unreasonably trying to get richness into their soil. "Written like a fine old English gentleman," wrote Stevenson to Edmund Gosse when Gosse was a very young man, just beginning that long series of volumes written like a fine old English gentleman. The wonder of this book is that it most decidedly could not have been written by Edmund Gosse. It is refined but not sallow, eclectic but not mediocre. Mrs. Woolf exposes her sensibility to the most diverse types of writing and has a vivid taste for them all. There is no idiosyncrasy in her taste. It seems to be *naturally* inclusive—which means, in terms of the style of her critical writing, that she seems to need no critical tools, no dogmas, no principles, to help her travel so widely. All these persons and books exist in Mrs. Woolf's sensibility and, miraculously, I should say, there is no trace of evidence that the usual troublesome questions of preference have arisen to molest her.

By this quality one recognizes, I think, the sensibility, rare in kind, which fashioned the form of "The Waves"—the sensibility in which the six unified structures of attitude which are symbolized by six people exist as static, isolated things. Just as in the novel the form affirmed disinterest in the possible conflicts between these persons, so in her "Common Readers" the style of the essays affirms disinterest in preferences. It is not common to achieve such disinterested awareness at once without effort and without mediocrity.

WILLIAM J. GORMAN.

The International Pamphlets

The International Pamphlets, Nos. 1 to 32: handbooks of political economy by various authors. New York: International Pamphlets. 16 and 32 pages. $.05 and $.10.

THESE pamphlets were designed to serve two purposes: primarily, to place in the hands of politically minded and awakening workers factual summaries for use in agitation and educational work among the less advanced; secondarily, to bring to students and "intellectuals," who are presumably capable of collecting their own factual summaries, a Marxist-Leninist interpretation which might otherwise escape them. In short, these pamphlets are mainly factual, but they are also interpretative, and the interpretations are understood to follow the official Communist party line. They are prepared under the direction of the Labor Research Association.

The question immediately raised by this description is whether these pamphlets follow a formula in structure and tone which makes the reader feel when he has read one, that he has read them all. The answer is that the variety, both of their presentation and mood and of their subject matter, rivals that of the monthly book-club selections. The theoretical lessons of the Paris Commune, for example, supply only a brief running text for the "story in pictures" which is the main content of that pamphlet; Maxim Gorky's appeal to the American intellectuals is a strong personal argument and exhortation; the revolt of the Arkansas farmers is treated in a short story by Whittaker Chambers. The subjects range from the heritage of Gene Debs to the growth of the Chinese Soviets, and from farming problems in the Soviet Union to the "yellow dog" contract. The two most recent additions to the series are No. 31, "Bonus March," which lays emphasis on the political role played by W. W. Waters and General Glassford; and No. 32, "On the Chain Gang," in which John L. Spivak continues the excellent reporting job he began in "Georgia Nigger."

The pamphlets are not uniform in respect to the proportion of factual and theoretical content. Some, such as No. 2, on "The War in the Far East," start out with a

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more or less elaborate statement of more or less a-priori interpretation and contain relatively little factual matter; others are a mass of facts gathered from personal testimony, with brief interpretations and comparisons of the American scene with situations in the Soviet Union—such as No. 24, on "The End of the Ford Myth"; and still others, like Gorky's, are a running blend of fact and argument. Some few of them appear lacking in real interest to either agitator or student, such as No. 3, on "Chemical Warfare," which contains little of value that has any necessary relation to chemical warfare *per se*. It becomes clear as one goes through the series that the best of the pamphlets are those in which the facts are so copious, and arrayed in such form, that the a-priori interpretation not only becomes suddenly empirical, but is less corroborated by the facts than compelled by them.

Pamphlets No. 1 through No. 20 have been collected in two bound volumes, and ten more will doubtless soon be so collected. For instructors in "bourgeois" schools who are ready to dare the lightning, they would make invaluable supplementary reading in international relations, sociology and political economy. WINCHELL TAYLOR.

Indian Cemetery

The Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe, by Margaret Mead. New York: Columbia University Press. 323 pages. $4.50.

Red Mother, by Frank B. Linderman. New York: The John Day Company. 256 pages. $3.

Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux, by Stanley Vestal. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 367 pages. $3.50.

WE HAVE become accustomed to out-of-the-way fare from Dr. Mead's facile pen. In her "Coming of Age in Samoa" and "Growing Up in New Guinea" she has thrown much needed light on the childhood of the primitives. In her latest book she examines, with scientific care but not without sympathy, the tragic mess which invariably results from the impact of white upon aboriginal culture. The subject scrutinized is a Plains Indian tribe, disguised—for all but anthropologists—by a pseudonym: the Antlers.

The picture is pathetic. In the old days the Antlers valued property, but not for hoarding. Rather did merit attach to the distribution of property "in certain specific ways." The more a man gave away the higher was his worth. Under the changed conditions of guarded reservation life this cultural trait becomes a vice. Wealth to the Indian is but a means to extravagance and display. Not infrequently it comes his way only to be dissipated with amazing rapidity. "Oh, do I have to go through all that again!" was the anguished cry of an Indian when struck unexpectedly by a second inheritance. Similarly in politics. Once a free social agent, controlled by ties of kinship and the limited powers of a hereditary chieftain, the Indian is now reduced to the status of an irresponsible, a child. He has rights, often wider ones than his white neighbors, but no obligations. He may contract debts but cannot be held to pay them. He is fed, healed, clothed, free of cost. He lives in a world of unreality which escapes his control.

What the author has to report about Antler women is of special interest. The old Antler society was paternal; women functioned in it as reflectors of male glory. But of course, like women everywhere, they were in charge of the day-by-day needs of the household. Now that the men have gone to the dogs, the relative social status of women

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has risen. The households, devastated and moribund, are still there, and the woman is still in charge. Similar shifts, it may be noted, might be observed in situations vastly different from those of the Indian reservation, where an old order collapses without immediate replacement by a new one. After the war and revolution in Russia, when the economic efficacy of men was undermined by social chaos and political passion, life for long was sustained by the drudging diligence of women. It is difficult to read the pages of Dr. Mead's book without experiencing a sense of shame. In this, perhaps, lies one of its merits.

One turns to Mr. Linderman's "Red Mother" with a feeling of relief. Here the old life of the Indian prevails again, at least to the imagination. We are still given to the rather absurd notion that no personalities exist among primitives. Books such as Linderman's "American," which will be remembered by many, are calculated to dispel this delusion. Pretty-Shield, the Crow—what a charming old lady! What vivacity, temper, intelligence, humanity! There is a touch of genuineness in this highly personal record; and humor, too. The very names of the months in which Pretty-Shield's story is set, breathe the spirit of ancient Indian days: April, the moon when the sage-hens dance; July, the moon when the berries begin to turn red; November, the moon when leaves are on the ground; September, the moon in which plums fall. Pretty-Shield, true daughter of the Plains, thrills in spite of herself when she recounts war exploits. "When I talk about war, I forget my grandchildren," she says—of whom incidentally she has nine, all sleeping on the floor of their hut together with their grandmother. From the mouth of Pretty-Shield, who has lived through many snows, we hear about the going of the buffalo of which

> . . . since the beginning of things there had always been so many! . . . We believed for a long time that the buffalo would again come to us; but they did not. We grew hungry and sick and afraid, all in one. Not believing their own eyes our hunters rode very far looking for buffalo, so far away that even if they had found a herd we could not have reached it in half a moon. "Nothing; we found nothing," they told us; and then, hungry, they stared at the empty plains, as though dreaming. After this their hearts were no good any more.

As literature, Stanley Vestal's "Sitting Bull" is less absorbing. It lacks the personal touch of Pretty-Shield's account. Sitting Bull, by the way, belonged to the Teton-Dakota, arch-enemies of the Crow. At one point the Crow medicine woman has some nasty things to say about the "Lacota" chieftain, words to be taken with a grain of salt. For Sitting Bull, warrior, chief, medicine man and wise man, strategist, organizer, composer of songs, embodies the sum total of Plains virtue. Vestal's history is a welcome contribution to the enormous literature inspired by the Dakota chief, white men's most stubborn and talented adversary. The version of Custer's "last stand," as given by the author, might well be added as a footnote to the conventional textbook account of the affair. Unfortunately Mr. Vestal withholds the many documents and statements of witnesses on which his story is founded. In view of the controversial nature of the topic, it would have been wiser, I think, if the author had added these references in an appendix. As it stands, however, the picture of the old warrior-saint is convincing, and it tallies with what anthropologists know about his people and their own estimate of one of their most exalted leaders.

ALEXANDER GOLDENWEISER.

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Book Notes

Biography and Memoirs

JOHN SEVIER: Pioneer of the Old Southwest, by Carl S. Driver. *Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 240 pages. $2.50.*

Dr. Driver, assistant professor of History at Vanderbilt University, has written a scholarly and painstaking life of Tennessee's spectacular first Governor. John Sevier, moving westward from Virginia, slaughtered the Indians, stole their land, engaged in various shady speculations, became involved in a feud with Andrew Jackson, was the only Governor of the short-lived state of Franklin, went to Congress, and died a local hero wishing he had taken more Indian land. Trying to transform a small hero into a big hero, Dr. Driver neglects those phases of Sevier's life which make him, if not very important, at least extremely interesting.

LAUGHING TORSO, by Nina Hamnett. *New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith. 326 pages. $3.*

Nina Hamnett's description of her birth—"Everybody was furious, especially my Father, who still is. As soon as I became conscious of anything I was furious, too, at having been a girl"—suggests the tone of her autobiography. To use one of her own phrases, it is "terrific," even the writing. She revolted against being made into a middle-class English lady, and set out to be an artist, via the bohemian world of Paris and London, pre-war and post-war. She married one Edgar, and they amused themselves by heaving plates at each other. She met practically the whole Continental world of art and letters, and mentions names familiarly—Modigliani, Brancusi, Jean Cocteau, Gertrude Stein, Richard Aldington, etc., etc. It used to be Nina's custom to tour the Paris cafés and end up at les Halles "amongst the cabbages." This is the story of an English Kiki on the loose. The author, at the age of forty-one, has reached the philosophical conclusion that "Now that I am much older I think perhaps I am better off as I am."

Science

THE CAUSES OF EVOLUTION, by J. B. S. Haldane. *New York: Harper and Brothers. 242 pages. $2.50.*

This latest book by one of England's most distinguished biologists summarizes the status of evolution in the light of recent evidence drawn principally from the field of genetics. Accepting the fact of evolution as beyond question, Haldane discusses the far from settled question of its underlying causes, presenting material relating to natural and sexual selection, mutation and variation. The chapter on "Genetical Analysis" is exceptionally good, though brief, as is the discussion on "What Is Fitness?" In his final chapter Haldane attempts, with more daring than success, to include the phenomena of consciousness within the evolutionary domain, but the Appendix on the mathematical theory of natural selection will satisfy those readers who prefer their speculations in more rigorous form. And it is well that so influential a scientist should warn us against discovering any higher "purpose" or "mind" in a process which has required three hundred million years to produce a Shakespeare or a Faraday.

EARTH HISTORY, by Luther C. Snider. *New York: The Century Company. 683 pages, illustrated. $4.50.*

In this substantial volume the earth is made to tell its own story with a thoroughness and charm not usually found together in popular-science manuals. Beginning with earth materials and processes the author, who is a geologist of broad practical experience and a gift for clear statement, at once gives his readers a sense of the dynamic character of forces lying just a few miles below our feet. Section II, on the continents, sets forth our present knowledge of earth formations in the different areas of the globe, with special reference to the geologic epochs from Pre-Cambrian to Pleistocene: this includes a brief but able discussion of various theories of earth origin and structure, with mention of Moulton, Alfred Wegener and Harold Jeffries. "The History of Living Things," relating geology to biology, is a valuable feature of the volume, not only for the wealth of information it contains and

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Fiction

THE SALUTATION AND OTHER STORIES, by Sylvia Townsend Warner. *New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.*

These long, short and shorter stories differ strangely in spirit from Miss Warner's novels, which were notable for a satire shrewd, deft, yet startlingly free from bitterness. "The Salutation" shares the more embittered tone the author has heretofore confined to her poetry. Whether because of this, or in addition to it, these stories do not represent Miss Warner at her most distinguished. Exquisitely written, like all her work, poignantly successful in a few instances, they offer the reader the satisfaction of enjoying and admiring while he reads; but they do not give that further delight of illumination in reading and in retrospect so richly furnished by "Mr. Fortune's Maggot," "Lolly Willowes" and "The True Heart."

Contributors

JOHN T. FLYNN, known widely as a magazine writer on financial topics, is the author of several books: "Investment Trusts Gone Wrong!" (The New Republic Dollar Series), "Graft in Business" and "God's Gold," a biography of John D. Rockefeller, which appeared last fall.

OWEN D. YOUNG, Chairman of the Board of the General Electric Company, needs no further identification.

LINDSAY ROGERS, author of several volumes on social subjects and a contributor to various magazines in this country and abroad, is Burgess Professor of Public Law at Columbia University.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP, the author of "Many Thousands Gone" and other volumes of prose and verse, has been living in France for several years.

SELDEN RODMAN, a graduate of Yale and an editor of Common Sense, the new fortnightly magazine, recently published a book of verse, "Mortal Triumph."

YVOR WINTERS, who teaches English at Stanford University, is the author of several volumes of verse, the most recent being "The Journey and Other Poems."

ROLFE HUMPHRIES, poet and critic, is a former editor of Measure and the author of "Europa," a book of verse. an authoritative life of Zola which was reprinted in

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON'S first biography was an authoritative life of Zola which was reprinted in England and received considerable attention in France. He is at present completing a book dealing with the careers of the great American capitalists.

ROBERT CANTWELL, author of a novel, "Laugh and Lie Down," is a staff writer for Al Smith's magazine, The New Outlook, and a contributor of articles and book reviews to Common Sense and other periodicals. His second novel, "The Land of Plenty," is to be published in the late spring.

WILLIAM J. GORMAN was graduated last June from the University of Michigan, where he contributed literary and dramatic criticism to the college newspaper. He received first prize for the book review which he submitted in the college contest held last spring by The New Republic.

WINCHELL TAYLOR has contributed frequently to The New Freeman and The Saturday Review of Literature. He is now on the editorial staff of The New Yorker.

ALEXANDER GOLDENWEISER, one of the better known American anthropologists, is at present professor of Thought and Culture at the University of Oregon. His latest book, "History, Psychology and Culture," is being published this month by Alfred A. Knopf.

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